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Unkosher rabbis?

Page 12

Amichai: Master of metaphor

Books

Local hero: Tel Aviv tuna tips the scales

Page 5

Index

Bazaar 5

Business 8

Crossword 11

Movies/TV 11

Opinion 8

Sports 10



Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein (left) shares a toast with (left to right) Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, State Attorney Edna Arbel, and former attorney-general Michael Ben-Yair, upon assuming his new post yesterday. (Brian Hendler)

Rubinstein assumes A-G post

Elyakim Rubinstein assumed the post of attorney-general yesterday, saying he was accepting his new responsibilities with "fear and love."

The fear, he said, stemmed from the possibility that he would make a serious mistake, while the love was for the courts and for the post.

The new attorney-general was warmly welcomed with a festive reception at the Justice Ministry in Jerusalem, attended by Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi, former attorney-general Michael Ben-Yair, State Attorney Edna Arbel, ministry Director-General Nir Arad and ministry staffers.

Arbel said she was sure Rubinstein would "rebuild the fallen Tabernacle of David," and would restore the prestige of the State Attorney's Office and the office of the attorney-general.

Rubinstein, in his address to the gathering, called on the country to find "the golden mean" that could unite its diverse sectors, adding he hoped he could inject substance into the country's Jewish and democratic principles.

He quoted from both Jewish sources and the Koran on the importance of the judicial system.

He added he was sorry his late parents could not be present, quipping, "My father would have enjoyed hearing all the praise, and my mother would have believed it."

Attorney Roni Bar-On, who was attorney-general for two days last month before resigning after the public outcry that greeted his appointment, offered his best wishes to Rubinstein in an interview on Army Radio.

"I am sure he will fulfill his tasks intelligently, to the benefit of the whole judicial system, which is dear to me and to us all," he said. (Ium)

Netanyahu: We must keep edge

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will not protest the possible sale of 100 F-16 fighter planes to Saudi Arabia when he meets with President Bill Clinton at the White House today.

However, he will seek reassurances that Israel's qualitative edge will be preserved, Israeli officials said here yesterday.

The two leaders will also discuss data, uncovered by Israel and recently relayed to the US, dealing with Russian cooperation in Iran's efforts to build a longer-range Scud-type missile.

But the primary focus of their talks is expected to be the Palestinian and Syrian tracks in the peace process.

A senior US official said the administration is "certainly interested in hearing [Netanyahu's] thoughts, to the extent he's willing to share them, [on] where he wants to take the process."

"It's very important. It's a chance to review the thinking on the next steps, both in regard to implementing the Palestinian track and renewing the Syrian track," he said.

Speaking in Amsterdam en route to the US yesterday, Netanyahu said it was up to Syria to decide if it wants to pursue peace.

"Syria has to make a decision. Does it want peace. If it wants peace it can come to the peace table very quickly. If it doesn't want peace it will find ways to obstruct the resumption of the talks," he told reporters at Amsterdam airport.

Netanyahu held brief talks in Amsterdam with Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok and said he would return to the Netherlands on April 10 for more extensive talks.

Netanyahu's visit to Washington kicks off a month-long period during which some of the region's key players are arriving. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat is due here later in the month and Jordan's King Hussein and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak are due here next month.

Taken together, the US official said, the four meetings are important because "they come following a very intense period — the Hebron understanding that launched a new chapter of the peace process following a problematic period. This is how we build on Hebron to see where the peace process goes."

Netanyahu's visit opens at the Blair House official guest residence with his first meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

He is then scheduled to meet with the chairman and ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, Benjamin Gilman and Lee Hamilton, and afterward with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms.

Later in the day Netanyahu is to meet with Vice President Al Gore. Then he goes to the Pentagon for a meeting with Defense Secretary William Cohen.

Meanwhile, members of Congress have this week attacked Mubarak and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa for what they contend is Cairo's lack of helpfulness in advancing peace in the region.

At a hearing yesterday, Albright was twice told by members of the House foreign operations subcommittee that Egypt is playing a negative role.

Sidney Yates of Illinois, the ranking minority member of the panel, said he is "a little disappointed" with how Egypt has "conducted itself" in the peace process and in general since Netanyahu came to power.

Albright responded by stating that the US method of conveying its views to Cairo is to "spend time" reminding Egypt of its trailblazing role in Middle East peacemaking, "and I think the message then becomes clear as to what we think at the moment."

On Tuesday, during another hearing with Albright, House International Relations Committee member Tom Lantos issued a veiled threat to Cairo that its foreign aid package could be endangered.

"I think it's important for our Egyptian friends to understand that when we deal with foreign aid appropriations, we will reward those like Jordan who effectively support peace in the region, and we will be less generous vis-a-vis those who, by their actions, have been less than helpful," Lantos said.

U2 includes Israel in upcoming tour

By HELEN KAYE and DAVID BRINN

U2, the rock and roll champions of human rights and political correctness and one of the world's biggest attractions, will be making its first visit to Israel on September 29.

U2's sole concert at Tel Aviv's Hayarkon Park is part of the "Popmart" tour to promote its upcoming album *Pop*, due to be released on March 3. The 62-city tour of the US, Canada and Europe is to begin in Las Vegas on April 25.

Speaking live on satellite TV from New York, U2 guitarist The Edge said, "We're a multiple outlet outfit. I think we have something for everybody."

The show's 18 numbers will include old and new songs, including those from *Pop*, the group's eleventh album. "Discotheque," the recently released single from the album, is already No. 1 on UK charts. U2 has sold 70 million records worldwide since 1980.

The group is bringing 200 people and 12,000 tons of equipment, including a four-meter-wide illuminated stuffed olive and the world's largest TV screen, measuring 50 by 17 meters.

Long-rumored to have avoided Israel due to perceived human-rights abuses, the Irish band has gone the way of fellow card-carrying liberals Peter Dinklage and Sting in giving Israel the post-Oslo seal of approval.

The quartet, consisting of the charismatic Bono, inventive guitarist The Edge, bassist Adam Clayton and drummer Larry Mullen, has been together since the late 1970s.

Together with R.E.M., they were one of the most successful bands to emerge from the ashes of the punk revolution. And just as importantly, they were an influence on hundreds of young bands, whose members admired their uncompromising attitudes.

At one point in the late 1980s, following the staggering critical and commercial success of *The Joshua Tree*, U2 was being called the '80s equivalent of The Beatles.

Following the mixed response to the sprawling *Rattle and Hum* film and record project, the band deliberately turned from self-righteous to ironic. Flashy costumes, experiments with electronics and dance tracks, and tongue-in-cheek stage personas dominated their 1990s albums and tours. However, the inspirational tone of their music remained.



Bono

Report: PM ignores PA ploys in capital

By LIAT COLLINS

Despite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claim that he is demanding the closure of Palestinian Authority operations and institutions in east Jerusalem in accordance with the Oslo Accords, he has instructed members of his staff to play down a list of 20 such violations, according to a report on Israel Radio's English-language news yesterday.

A list of the violations drawn up by the police and security establishment was presented to the Prime Minister's Office at the beginning of the week. It was published in *Ha'aretz*, and broadcast on the radio station yesterday. (See box.)

Although the Prime Minister's Office has released material on PA violations in the past — including a review after the Hebron deal was signed on the PLO's failure to amend its covenant — when presented with this list, the prime minister reportedly asked that it not be published.

According to the radio report, quoting unnamed sources, the reason is that the premier is not sure he will be able to fight all the activities and several cases might not stand up in the High Court of Justice.

Opposition to Netanyahu's stand on Jerusalem has been mounting among MKs from the coalition parties, reaching a new height yesterday when former science minister Binyamin Ze'ev Begin (Likud), who resigned from the cabinet over the Hebron agreement, filed an urgent parliamentary motion entitled: "Netanyahu is dividing Jerusalem."

In his explanation to the motion, which will probably be heard next week, Begin said: "Before the

Continued on Page 2

- Palestinian Authority offices that are operating in Jerusalem in violation of the Oslo Accords include:**
- Palestinian Ministry of Religious Affairs, operating at the entrance to the Temple Mount.
 - Office of the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, appointed by the PA.
 - The activities of the Palestinian security forces
 - Orient House
 - Palestinian Education Ministry
 - Palestinian Youth and Sport Ministry
 - Palestinian Mapping and Geography Ministry.
 - The office of PA council member of Hatam Abdel Khader
 - The Palestinian Housing Council;
 - The Jerusalem Committee of the elected Palestinian Council which reportedly arranges anti-Israel demonstrations on Jerusalem-related issues.
 - The Palestinian Small Business project, reportedly operating within the framework of the Palestinian Ministry of Supplies.
 - The National Islamic Committee to Confront the Settlements
 - The Palestinian Institute for the Wounded
 - The Palestinian Energy Center
 - WAFA, Palestinian news agency
 - Al-Quds University, said to follow PA dictates
 - In addition, the PA is said to have been involved in:
 - An attempted takeover of Mokassed Hospital
 - Intervention at Augusta Victoria Hospital
 - Attempts to take control of the Supreme Islamic Council at the entrance to the Temple Mount
 - The PA has also appointed a Jerusalem District governor.

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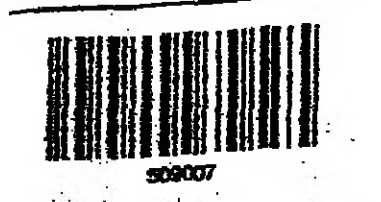
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NEWS

in brief

Soldier dies of injuries from traffic accident

Lt. Einat Rahman, of Petah Tikva, died early yesterday morning at Beersheba's Soroka Hospital of wounds sustained in a traffic accident near Yeroham on Tuesday. Sgt. Yifat Naor, of Tel Aviv, Cpl. Rinat Farhi, of Rishon LeZion, and another soldier died on Tuesday.

In Acre, two people were seriously injured in separate accidents. A 45-year-old pedestrian was struck in hit-and-run accident, while a 15-year-old backed his father's car into a friend.

Iim

Mother charged with murdering her newborn

Luna Tzoni, 32, of Hadera, was charged in Haifa District Court yesterday with murdering her newborn child.

According to the charge sheet, Tzoni threw the baby out the window of her parents' second-story apartment. Neighbors found the baby in the yard and took her to Hillel Yoffe Hospital, where she died.

Iim

Woman dies in fall from porch

A 76-year-old Rishon LeZion woman died yesterday morning after falling from a second-story porch while hanging laundry. The woman was brought to Assaf Harofeh Hospital in critical condition, and died in the afternoon. Police said the incident was apparently an accident.

Iim

Boy, 17, held for raping girl

A 17-year-old boy was arrested yesterday on suspicion of raping a friend who studies at a boarding school in Kfar Sava.

The girl said the boy raped her two days earlier when he came to visit her at her dormitory. She said she asked him to leave, and escorted him outside. He then dragged her into a field and raped her, she said.

The boy had been thrown out of the school after attacking the same girl. He will be brought before a Juvenile Court judge for a remand hearing today.

Iim

No compensation for driver of stolen car

The Tel Aviv District Court ruled yesterday that a man who was driving a stolen car when he crashed and suffered serious injuries is not eligible for the compensation given to traffic accident victims.

Shaul Biton, of Herzliya, sued the Kranit company for compensation for the May 1989 accident, in which the car overturned.

Judge Nissim Yeshaya noted that the car had been stolen a number of days earlier and the driver knew this. Biton is therefore not eligible for compensation, he said.

Iim

Hebron prepares to reopen retail market

By HERB KEMON

A retail market in front of Hebron's Avraham Avinu compound, closed since the 1994 Machpela Cave massacre, was being readied for reopening yesterday, as Palestinian and Israeli representatives unlocked and entered some of the shops there to assess what repairs are needed.

Under the Hebron redeployment agreement, this market, which used to be a wholesale market, will be opened instead — because of security considerations — as a retail market. One IDF official said the reason for the change is obvious: to keep large trucks from loading and unloading at the site — something that would pose a security risk for the Jewish compound.

Settlement leaders have fought a long battle to get the market moved from the site, saying that it will bring thousands of Palestinians literally to the doorstep of the settlement's largest Jewish compound, posing a massive security problem.

The settlement has for months had a large sign above the market reading that the market is built on land stolen from the Jews after the 1929 massacre. Palestinian merchants praised

the imminent opening of the market.

"This is a good achievement. Life starts to return to normal," vegetable seller Abdel Hadi Nasreddine told AP.

Meanwhile, the IDF yesterday demolished five illegally built homes in the Hebron area. Civil administration spokesman Peter Lerner said the homes were built within the last year without the proper licenses. The homes were built along the newly constructed bypass roads, which were built so that traffic would not go through developed Palestinian areas.

Lerner said the demolitions were part of an ongoing policy by the civil administration to prevent illegal building in Area C, the areas in the territories still under Israeli control.

The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza claim that the Palestinians are building hundreds of illegal units in Area C in an attempt to create facts on the ground before further redeployment talks begin. The goal behind this illegal building, according to council officials, is to create land links between the various Palestinian autonomous areas, thereby setting the groundwork for a Palestinian state.

Mordechai: No Lebanon pullout

By LIAT COLLINS

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai told the Knesset plenum yesterday that there is "no alternative to IDF presence in the south Lebanon security zone."

He was answering a motion presented by Likud and coalition faction chairman Michael Eitan on a recent *Newsweek* report that South Lebanese Army soldiers are collaborating with Hizbullah.

He completely rejected a unilateral IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, saying the result would be terror attacks in northern Israel, like the attacks in Misgav Am, Avivim and Nahariya that took place before the security zone was established. Mordechai said the number of individual SLA soldiers helping Hizbullah had dropped.

During the debate, Mordechai and Eitan exchanged sharp words about a possible

IDF withdrawal.

"We cannot as citizens hear that the brilliant, large and sophisticated IDF says there's no other way. We have no other country, but there must be many other ways," Eitan said.

The IDF and security leadership is of course busy day and night in trying to find solutions," Mordechai said. "It does not need incitement and insults to make it think seriously. We've sought every way."

"There's not one leader with whom I haven't raised the subject of finding a solution for Lebanon. But as of today, the same solutions are not to be found. And what is necessary today is to strengthen the spirit of IDF soldiers, first and foremost from within this House and government."

Criticizing the timing of the public discussion by some MKs on a possible IDF pullout from Lebanon, Mordechai said: "It's

unacceptable that there are those who make cynical use of a tragic accident," referring to last week's helicopter collision.

"They hear in Beirut what's being said here," Mordechai said, adding: "They don't just want to get us out of Lebanon but out of Jerusalem and it's better we fight them there even if the price is heavy."

The minister said talk of a withdrawal hurt the serving soldiers, the bereaved families and northern residents. He also noted that the south Lebanese residents would pay a heavy price and turn against Israel if it were to pull back.

The so-called Kochav Yair circle led by MK Gideon Ezra (Likud), which is examining a new approach to the IDF presence in south Lebanon, met in the Knesset yesterday.

Eitan announced he was not a member of the group and had only attended the first

meeting to hear the views presented.

Former members of the security establishment who also attended the Saturday night meeting at Ezra's Kochav Yair home — retired major-general Danny Rothschild, former General Security Service head Ya'acov Perry and former senior GSS staffer Yossi Ginosar — were also noticeably absent. Ginosar said earlier this week that they had been invited to that meeting only to give their professional opinions.

At the outset of yesterday's meeting Ezra stressed that although the question of unilateral withdrawal from the security zone had been raised at Saturday night's meeting, this was not the aim of the group. He said the circle aimed at finding "imaginative new solutions" to the Lebanon problem, agreeing that a unilateral withdrawal would result in terrorists crossing the border.

Lebanon complains about IAF raids

By DAVID RUDGE

The Lebanese government submitted a protest to the Grapes of Wrath monitoring group yesterday over the IAF strikes deep into Lebanon the previous day.

Syria also criticized the raids by IAF warplanes and helicopter gunships against a Hizbullah-run radio station, the Voice of the Oppressed, and bases of Ahmed Jibril's PFLP-General Command

in the Bekaa Valley, and Nu'ameh, just south of Beirut.

Hizbullah's Manar television station reported that a shepherd wounded in the attack had died of his wounds, although there was no confirmation of this from any other source. At least three members of Jibril's group, including a senior commander, were also wounded.

The extremist Shi'ite organization said the raids were a clear violation of the understandings

reached at the end of Operation Grapes of Wrath last April.

Mohammed Yaghi, a senior Hizbullah official in the Bekaa region, said the organization would increase its attacks. "The Israelis should know that we have the ability and that our struggle will continue until we kick them out of our land," Yaghi was quoted as saying in the Lebanese media.

Syria reacted bitterly to the attacks as well as to comments made by

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu when he visited troops at an IDF position on the northern border.

Radio Damascus called on Syrian army troops to be on full alert in case Israeli leaders were planning an "offensive adventure." State-run newspapers said Netanyahu had hardened his position on the eve of his visit to Washington, with the bombing and shelling of civilians in Lebanon.

Lebanese radio stations report-

ed extensive low-level flights by IAF warplanes over many parts of Lebanon yesterday. The only incident on the ground, however, was a long-range mortar attack on a South Lebanese Army position in the western sector of the security zone yesterday morning.

There were no casualties or damage as a result of the attack, for which the Amal Shi'ite movement claimed responsibility. IDF gunners returned fire.

Arafat lauds freed women

Hundreds of friends and family members mobbed freed Palestinian women prisoners as they arrived early yesterday morning in Ramallah, where Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat greeted them.

"I'm proud to be on free Palestinian land!" shouted Abeer Wheidy, 27, as she climbed off a bus and was surrounded by ecstatic relatives who had been waiting since noon Tuesday for her release. Wheidy, convicted of commanding the Fatah cell that murdered Ofa resident Zvi Klein in 1991, had served 4 1/2 years of a life term.

Arafat called the releases a good sign for peace with Israel. "No doubt this will help the relationship between the two peoples," he said. "It was difficult, but in the end they were released and that's what counts," said Col. Jibril Rajoub, head of preventative security in the West Bank.

Earlier Tuesday, Palestinian women in traditional village cos-



Murderer Abeer Wheidy tells reporters in Ramallah yesterday that "the struggle will go on."

(Romer)

turns danced in a jubilant circle after the first prisoner — Lamia Marouf — was released.

Marouf, 31, who served 10 years of a life term for her involvement in the 1984 kidnapping and murder of

soldier David Manos, was deported to Brazil, where she has dual citizenship and her daughter lives. Her

husband, who was also involved in the murder, remains imprisoned here. (AP)

Prince Hassan expresses hope for agreement on Jerusalem

By ELDAD BECK

PARIS — Since Israel and the Palestinian Authority came to an agreement on Hebron, there is hope they can do the same regarding Jerusalem, Jordanian Crown Prince Hassan said yesterday in Paris.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu demonstrated his pragmatism by signing the Hebron agreement and releasing the Palestinian women prisoners, Hassan said. These acts, which Hassan said show Netanyahu's

respect for the agreements signed by the previous government, combined with the Beilin-Eitan plan, create a new, hopeful political context in the Middle East.

Hassan, on an official visit to France at the invitation of French Prime Minister Alain Juppe, met with President Jacques Chirac yesterday. During his discussions with the French leaders, Hassan stressed that the Hebron accord restored the essential framework for the peace process.

"The legitimacy of the interim

autonomy accords has been acknowledged. Let us hope and pray that Hebron becomes the beacon guiding the future collaboration so that progress toward our ultimate goal will be assured," Prince Hassan said at a dinner Juppe hosted for him.

However, he emphasized peace talks with Syria and Lebanon must be renewed as soon as possible.

"We cannot speak about advancing peace while there is a stalemate in the talks with Syria and Lebanon," Hassan said.

CAPITAL

Continued from Page 1

elections Binyamin Netanyahu promised that the government under his leadership would close PLO institutions in Jerusalem. After eight months, the PLO establishments in Jerusalem are flourishing and PLO security service men are roaming freely in Jerusalem.

The name he gave the motion is a play on the Likud's election slogan saying Shimon Peres would divide Jerusalem. Motions with the same title also were filed by Labor MKs Moshe Shahal and Micha Goldman. Shahal's motion mentions both the PA activities and the government's delay in starting the Har Homa housing project; Goldman's concentrates just on the Har Homa issue.

Labor faction chairman Ra'anan Cohen said the prime minister's refusal to allow the Har Homa project "hinted at his intention to negotiate on Jerusalem."

He belittled the group of coalition MKs from the Land of Israel Front who are rebelling against party lines until the construction work in Jerusalem gets underway, and said they are "just pretending to be threatening."

Cohen called on them, however,

to support his bill calling for a special Knesset majority to approve any proposed change in Jerusalem's status.

The Third Way also discussed the Jerusalem issue in its faction meeting yesterday and criticized the prime minister over his handling of construction in the capital.

Party leader and Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani told reporters, however, his faction would not consider leaving the government as "we can work better from within. The faction decided it has commenced the struggle [for Jerusalem]."

Third Way MK Alex Lubotsky used much stronger language. "If Netanyahu will not build in Jerusalem, then it might mean it is worth giving [Labor leader candidate] Ehud Barak a chance," he said.

US labor activist Benjamin Gebiner dies

Benjamin Gebiner, the longtime general secretary of the Workers' Circle and the animated radio commentator who devoted his life in America to Jewish and labor causes, died in New York on Friday. He was 98.

Gebiner, who arrived in New York from Poland in 1921, was an administrator, teacher, lawyer, professor and journalist. He was a contributor to the Yiddish newspaper *The Forward*, and from 1950 to 1972 provided daily commentary on the news for the paper's radio station, WEVD.

Gebiner's friends included David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir.

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SAMUEL VALINSKY

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Kirov Ballet to dance here

The world-renowned Kirov Ballet, its top stars and orchestra will open the 1997 Israel Festival on May 28 with a glittering production of 'Swan Lake' at Jerusalem's Sultan's Pool, which is being reconstructed for the event. The company then will move to the Roman theater in Caesarea for three more performances of the Tchaikovsky classic and a single performance of 'Don Quixote.' The stellar lineup includes Julia Makhalina, who danced here in 1994, and Farukh Ruzimatov, who danced at the Gala of the Stars at the Israel Festival last year.

(Text: Helen Kaye)

המלחמה

NEWS

in brief

Israeli stamps to be marketed in Far East

An agency for the sale, marketing and distribution of Israeli stamps and other philatelic products in China, Singapore and Hong Kong is opening today. The agency, located in Hong Kong, will be opened with a dinner to be attended by Chinese Foreign Minister Qichen Qian, Postal Authority director-general Moshe Tery, Consul-General in Hong Kong Zohar Raz, Philatelic Service director Yimon Beilin and various diplomats. The office, which has been given exclusive rights in those areas, will be managed by the Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corporation based in New York. The IGPC, which has offices in Hong Kong, currently runs the official Israel Philatelic Service in North America.

Judy Siegel

Helms: PM must reduce Israeli abortions

US Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Sen. Jesse Helms is to call on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "to immediately reduce the number of abortions in Israel, or else substantial numbers of senators and congressmen would demand a reduction of foreign aid to Israel."

So says Dr. Eli Shushel, head of the Efrat organization, which promotes childbirth and opposes abortions, who met with Helms and California Congressman Bob Dornan on their recent visit here.

The two US "right-to-life" legislators said they would invite Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai to the US to visit congressmen and senators who oppose abortion.

Judy Siegel

IDF, Bar-Ilan sign deferment agreement

The IDF and Bar-Ilan University have signed an agreement allowing 50 honor students in physics and chemistry to defer their military service for the duration of their college studies. The IDF agreed to the arrangement due to the military's lack of soldiers trained in these fields.

The agreement differs from the *Anuda* (academic reserve) program, in which students mix university studies with military service in the summers and semester breaks and then sign on extra time. In this agreement, students are not obligated to sign on extra time for the right to defer their service.

Arieh O'Sullivan

Study: Pollution affecting health of Tel Avivians

MKs expressed shock at the data presented yesterday to the Knesset Interior Committee from a survey taken last year in Tel Aviv of second- to sixth-grade schoolchildren checking a possible link between their health and the level of air pollution in their neighborhoods. In certain neighborhoods, the frequency of respiratory problems is 45 percent higher than elsewhere in the city. The list of complaints includes asthma, bronchitis and severe coughing. The deviation from air cleanliness standards is higher in Tel Aviv than in any other city in the country, according to the Environment Ministry.

Liat Collins

IDF appeals decision giving gay partner widower's benefits

By ESTHER HECHT

A month after an appeals committee attached to the Tel Aviv District Court ruled the IDF must recognize Adir Steiner as the widower of Col. Doron Maisel and grant him all benefits to which such widowers are entitled, the IDF has appealed the decision.

Steiner's suit, one of three he has filed against the IDF, derives from his seven-year relationship with Maisel, who died of cancer in 1991 at age 46.

Ten days ago, in response to another of the suits, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai declared the IDF would recognize Steiner "as if he were a family member" in matters, primarily ceremonial, related to perpetuating Maisel's memory.

"The army is being inconsistent," Steiner said yesterday. "Now I'm entitled to weep at memorial ceremonies, but when it comes to receiving pension benefits, for which deductions were made from Doron's salary, they don't recognize me."

The IDF's appeal, in Jerusalem District Court, is based mainly on the language of the law pertaining

to pensions, which it claims cannot be interpreted as granting benefits to same-sex partners.

"The appeal expresses no value judgment regarding the specific case nor in relation to the public debate on this issue," the IDF Spokesman said.

According to Steiner, however, the IDF's pursuit of the matter is "hypocritical and irresponsible." The army has declared there must be no discrimination against gays regarding the draft or advancement. In theory, a gay soldier can become the chief of staff.

"But if a gay soldier dies, they're saying he's worth less [than a heterosexual soldier], because they treat his partner as if he doesn't exist."

Meanwhile, Steiner's third suit, in which he is seeking recognition as the widower of a fallen soldier, is still pending. "Fallen soldiers" are those killed in battle, or who died during their service and because of their service. According to Steiner, an IDF medical committee determined Maisel's fatal illness (melanoma) was caused by overexposure to the sun during his army service.

Livnat, Knesset discuss extraterrestrial life

By JUDY SIEGEL

The Knesset's deliberations yesterday were out of this world, as Communications Minister Limor Livnat stated that the existence — or nonexistence — of unidentified flying objects cannot be verified by scientific methods.

Livnat, the government's liaison with the Knesset, was responding on behalf of the Science Ministry to a parliamentary question by MK Avi Yehzekel (Labor) dealing with recent claims about the landing of saucers from outer space. The latest one, revolving around a little green thing found at a moshav, was proven by foreign scientists to have terrestrial origins.

"No serious body in the world has authoritative evidence of so-called visits by creatures from space," Livnat said. "It's true that a lack of proof doesn't mean that something does not exist, but in the absence of evidence, anyone is free to believe what he wants."

The minister noted with irony that despite the "intensive encounters" by extraterrestrial

creatures with laborers, farmers, housewives and pensioners, none of them have ever met a physicist, biologist, chemist or astronomer to get an exact scientific picture of the similarities and contrasts between our worlds."

The planet Earth "needed five billion years to develop intelligent life; although other parts of the universe are older, there may be heavenly bodies with life forms... but consider the fact that the average distance from another planet with the potential of life in our galaxy is 400 light-years, and it would take a spaceship 8.5 million years to get here."

The US government established investigative committees on UFOs in 1948, 1949, 1952 and 1962, and they discredited 95 percent of the testimonies, Livnat said, but "their conclusions did not weaken popular belief in UFOs. We don't know anything more about them today than we did 50 years ago, and that's true about the Loch Ness monster, astrology, parapsychology, palm reading and other strange and various notions."

Child advocate: Restore funding for school health services

By JUDY SIEGEL

Health services in the schools and kindergartens have collapsed due to a halt in funding in January, National Council for the Child director Dr. Yitzhak Kadman said in a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"This is criminal negligence," said Kadman, noting that "for the want of NIS 40 million a year, the halting of vaccinations and physical checkups could have serious consequences years from now... Let us not be surprised if, in a few years, the rate of defects, diseases and physical limitations has grown significantly."

The problem developed after the introduction of the national health insurance sys-

tem, which stipulates that all health services, including those at schools, be supplied by the four health funds.

The Parents Association has gone to court to prevent the government from charging parents extra health-service fees.

But the insurers demanded extra funds to cover the school services, beyond their share in health taxes. As a result, the government allocated NIS 27 million to the municipalities for the current school year. However, the funds ran out in January.

Some municipalities brought in contractors employing low-level doctors and nurses instead of community health professionals, who previously supplied health services in schools.

Some local authorities, however, took the

money and supplied no health services at all.

The Education Ministry said yesterday it and the Health Ministry would discuss a proposal whereby the Health Ministry will supply these services in the schools and kindergartens.

"The two ministries decided therefore to examine a proposal in which the Health Ministry would provide the services and in this way supervise the quality of service," according to the statement.

"Education Minister Zevulun Hammer believes that because there have been no state allocations for this since January, an immediate solution must be found." The education minister opposes charging parents for these services, as "their financial

burden is already enough," the statement said.

However, Health Ministry spokesman Effi Lahav said the Education Ministry's statement was "not accurate." Health Minister Yehoshua Matza had proposed that his ministry would supply health services only in development towns, via district health offices and family health centers.

"This would cover a third of all needy families in the country," Lahav said. "For this, the Treasury must transfer NIS 12 million in Education Ministry funds to the Health Ministry."

The spokesman stressed that the two ministers have not yet met to discuss the subject, and that a joint decision has yet to be reached.

Three Righteous Gentiles honored posthumously

By BAT-SHEVA TSUR

One day at the end of 1941, a 13-year-old boy from the Russian village of Kauchuk near Kursk, came across another youngster of his age lying unconscious in the street. Yesterday, the Russian boy, Sim Yerevin, received a certificate honoring his parents for saving the life of that Jewish boy.

Two other Righteous Gentiles from the former Soviet Union were also honored posthumously at yesterday's ceremony.

Back in 1941, Sim Yerevin, today a resident of Tiberias, ran to get water to revive the boy, a Jewish orphan by the name of Victor Feinstein, then took him home. Feinstein, it transpired, had contracted typhoid while wandering around for a year after his widowed mother was deported from their home town of Pereschnoi in the Ukraine.

Until the Red Army liberated the area about a year later, Ivan and Pelagea Yerevin cared for Feinstein as if he were their own son. At times of danger, they would send him to an elderly woman at the far end of the village who did not realize he was Jewish.

In 1993, Feinstein made aliya to Israel. Shortly afterward, he contacted Yad Vashem to have the Yerevins recognized for saving his life.

Meanwhile, Sim Yerevin, who had married a Jewess, applied to make aliya to Israel. In August 1996, his parents received the recognition from Yad Vashem. Just before that, Feinstein died, as did Sim Yerevin's wife. Yesterday Sim was the sole family member present at the Yad Vashem ceremony.

Also honored yesterday were the late Zinaida and Ludmila Zelinskayas who saved the life of a young Jewish woman in the Northern Caucasus by disguising her as a Christian and crossing into Moldavia with her. They forged documents belonging to a deceased relative which they said belonged to the Jewess, Tzipora.



Sim Yerevin (right) accepts a Righteous Gentile certificate in honor of his parents from Judge Ya'acov Meltz at Yad Vashem yesterday.

(Isaac Harari)

Since Tzipora died 30 years ago, the request to honor the Zelinskayas was made by her sister who recently made aliya.

Yvgenya Koretski received the award yesterday on behalf of her late husband, Alexander, who had saved a Jewish woman after her non-Jewish in-laws refused to keep her in their home for fear of their lives.

The Jewess, Genrietta Kononenko from Dnepropetrovsk, was offered poison by her mother-in-law who tried to get her to commit suicide after her husband was called up.

But Koretski decided to take the Jewess in, despite all the dangers, and he and his sister, Maria, prepared a small room for her in their home.

In 1943, as the Germans were

retreating, two policemen came to the house and found Kononenko. Maria took off her gold watch and

bribed them to leave. Alexander and Maria Koretski have meanwhile died, but Yvgenya, who

received the award, decided she would like to spend the rest of her life living in Israel.

Swiss confirm decision to set up Holocaust victims fund

The Swiss government formally agreed yesterday to set up and manage a humanitarian fund for Holocaust victims, but it did not commit itself to contributing to the fund.

A fund could be established within a week. Last week, the three major Swiss banks announced they had deposited SFR 100 million to start such a fund, and they invited donations from the Swiss government and business community.

The government will consult with business and Jewish organizations to determine the exact purpose and recipients of the fund, Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti said. It was likely that the

fund would be used for projects to aid destitute Holocaust survivors and their offspring.

Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg said from London last night, en route to testify in New York on the Holocaust compensation issue, "This is a great achievement. However, from our point of view, no one is doing us a favor. This is not Swiss money. It belongs to the Jews."

"The decision indicates good will, but not a solution to the problem. The only solution will be when all assets looted from the Jews will be returned."

Jerusalem Post Staff and agencies

Alut launches campaign for autistic children

By LIAT COLLINS

A week-long fund-raising campaign for Alut, the Association for Autistic Children, kicked off in the Knesset yesterday with several meetings and events attended by Leah Rabin, the organization's chairwoman.

"The problem of autism is that they fall between the stools of the various ministries," she said. "They are not retarded and yet they are not curable. They are dealt with by three ministries: Health, Labor and Social Affairs and Education, the only one which understands and cooperates with us via the special education system until the age of 21."

"At the age of 21, however, the problems start. Over and over again, we have been promised funds to establish and run hostels, and not received them. Local residents also do not jump for joy at having a hostel in their neighborhood."

Maxim Levy (Geshert-Likud), chairman of the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee, which held a meeting on the subject, told the participants that Israel has yet to successfully deal with the problems of special populations. He said there is no comparison between the conditions of boarding school-type establishments far from home and residential facilities where children can visit their own homes daily and

be part of the local community.

The Education Ministry's Leah Shaked said 1,500 autistics between ages three and 21 study in the special education system.

Liora Avigdor, from Alut, told the MKs that 17 years ago her father had murdered her 12-year-

old autistic son and committed suicide because he could not cope with the lack of help.

"And today, 17 years later, nothing has changed. There are still no solutions. In Haifa we established a course for 14 children but the facilities are closed because the min-

istries do not have a budget for it."

Efi Arbel from the Finance Ministry's budget department said the discussions his ministry are holding with the Health Ministry and Alut would be finished within a month, and then the construction of hostels could begin.

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Albania police stop protests as criticism rises

TIRANA (Reuters) - Albanian riot police swamped the center of Tirana yesterday to prevent the opposition from staging anti-government protests amid increasing international criticism of the leadership's attempts to contain the crisis.

Truckloads of police descended on the headquarters of the Forum for Democracy opposition alliance and prevented several prominent politicians from leaving the building.

Bystanders on street corners, mainly elderly women, shouted at policemen: "We will turn this into a Vlore" — a reference to the southern port where three people have died this week in fierce clashes between protesters and police.

"This is intolerable. All the leaders of the opposition were prevented from taking part on the orders of the interior ministry," said Skender Gjinushi, leader of the Social Democratic Party.

The Forum for Democracy, which groups 10 political parties, had scheduled a mid-day protest at Tirana's main stadium to demand the government's resignation, but the Interior Ministry banned the gathering.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said it was deeply worried about the growing violence in Albania, warning that the potential

for a serious crisis was at hand. Europe's top security body called on all sides in the Balkan state to respect the rule of law.

The British government said it was appalled by the violence in Albania, adding it was "deeply concerned about reports of arrests and intimidation of opposition leaders."

Opposition politicians said violence was inevitable if the right-wing government of President Sali Berisha did not back down and allow peaceful protests by investors who blame authorities for the collapse of pyramid investment schemes.

The crisis has left hundreds of thousands of savers in Europe's poorest nation without a penny, sparking some of the worst popular unrest since Albania's hardline Stalinist regime was toppled in 1991.

Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi vowed to crack down on the protests, which he says are organized by leftist extremists.

"The Democratic Party has organized to respond with our forces, not only the police," he said. "We are ready." About 5,000 people massed in the center of Vlore. The protests in the port town have been peaceful since Monday, when protesters enraged by the failure of a local investment scheme fought pitched battles with police.

North Korea accuses South of kidnapping top official

Post news agencies

TOKYO - The North Korean Foreign Ministry said yesterday one of the country's top officials, reported earlier to have defected to South Korea, must have been kidnapped.

The South Korean government had said that Hwang Jang-yop, a senior aide to the North's leader Kim Jong-il, had sought asylum at its embassy in the Chinese capital, Beijing, along with his assistant Kim Dok-hong.

A Pyongyang Foreign Ministry spokesman told the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA): "The South Korean authorities are spreading the rumor

that Hwang Jang-yop, secretary of the central committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, asked for "asylum" at their "embassy" in Beijing today on his way back from Tokyo. This is inconceivable and impossible.

"If it is true that Hwang Jang-yop is in the South Korean 'embassy' in Beijing, it is obvious that he has been kidnapped by the enemy. We are seeking information from the Chinese side through relevant channels," KCNA quoted him as saying. "If it is brought to light that the South Korean authorities kidnapped him and describe him as seeking 'asylum,' we will regard it as a serious incident without precedent and take due countermeasures. We expect that the

Chinese side will take appropriate measures in this regard," the spokesman added.

Hwang, 73, is one of the chief architects of North Korean communism, and would be the highest ranking Pyongyang official ever to seek asylum in the South.

He is credited with playing a leading role in shaping the policy of *juche*, a brand of fanatic self-reliance providing the ideological underpinning for the world's last Stalinist state.

He is believed to be a cousin of the nation's late leader, Kim Il Sung. He leaves a wife, two sons and a daughter behind in North Korea, officials in Seoul said.

The defection by Hwang came as North Korea was preparing to celebrate its biggest

holiday, the 55th birthday of its de facto leader, who rose to power upon the death of his father almost three years ago.

The weekend celebrations this year had already been overshadowed by the nation's worsening economic plight, aggravated by two successive years of devastating floods that have plunged North Korea toward famine.

For the third time in a year, the UN World Food Program issued an appeal this week for 100,000 metric tons of emergency food aid worth \$41 million for the impoverished country.

South Korean Ambassador Chung Jong-wook said Hwang defected at around 10 a.m. with an aide in his 50s.



Forging toward independence

Chechnya's new President Aslan Maskhadov raises his fist at his inauguration ceremony in Grozny yesterday. Elected last month, Maskhadov has promised to fight for full independence from Russia.

Suspect 'hated blacks, Jews'

FAYETTEVILLE, North Carolina (AP) — A former para-trooper accused of shooting a black couple to death as part of a skinhead initiation would give the Nazi salute while listening to a song about killing blacks and Jews, his ex-girlfriend testified.

James Burmeister also displayed Nazi flags and wore skinhead outfits in his Fort Bragg barracks room, and said that his white boot laces symbolized white supremacy, while yellow laces meant the wearer had killed someone, Kelly Cook Kelly testified as the trial opened.

Mrs. Kelly testified that in March 1995, Burmeister "told me that him and his friends were racists and they stuck with their own kind." Months later, she told Burmeister that being a skinhead was a phase.

"He told me I was right and it would be over when he killed someone."

She also identified Burmeister in a photo that showed a group giving a Nazi salute. She said the salute was given when they played a rock song called *Third Reich*, which had lyrics about killing blacks and Jews. The song, by a group called Robowa, was played for jurors.

Burmeister, 21, one of three former soldiers accused, is charged with murder and conspiracy in the Dec. 7, 1995, killings of Michael James and Jackie Burden.

Ecuador picks new president

QUITO (AP) — Congress chose its own leader as Ecuador's interim president, ending a governing crisis that has threatened this small Andean nation's political stability since the ouster of its elected president last week.

Fabian Alarcon — sworn in as the country's third president in a week — faces a huge budget deficit, inflation that could hit 50 percent this year and a public up in arms over recent austerity measures.

The 49-year-old Alarcon, the leader of Congress, replaces Rosalia Arteaga, the former vice-president who took over after lawmakers sacked President Abdala Bucaram for mental incapacity.

Fellow lawmakers voted 57-2 yesterday to elect Alarcon in a deal engineered by the powerful armed forces.

"The entire country is breathing easier because we have put this crisis behind us," said armed forces chief Gen. Paco Moncayo.

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Tour guide: Dr. Yoash Zohar

Monday March 17
LAND OF MILK AND HONEY
Cheese, honey, olive oil and wine - we'll taste them all on our way. We'll start at the organic dairy of Kiri, and continue on to the olive oil press at the Druze village of Yama, then the prize-winning Dalton winery. We'll also visit the bee hives of Shadmon Dvora and its silk production unit. The Galilee is especially beautiful at this time of the year. Join us!
NIS 215 (including lunch)
Tour guide: Israel Shalem

Tuesday March 25
IRISES ARE BLOOMING IN GILBOA
Every year in March it happens. Irises cover Mt. Gilboa. They are the largest, most beautiful and colorful, and some are yellow. We'll visit Nahal Toot on the trail of lupins, the "Cyclamen Hill" of Gilad and Givat Hamoreh. Lunch at Kibbutz Tirat Zvi.
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Tour guide: Hagit Leshner

Thursday April 3
ACRE - THE CRUSADER CITY
In July 1099, after they had captured Jerusalem, the Crusaders realized they needed a port with a major harbor. So they turned this small city into an important Crusader stronghold. The markets filled with goods, cloth, jewels and precious stones, for the troops to take home as souvenirs. We'll visit the Hospitalier Quarter and view the new discoveries, the Genoa Quarter - little Italy in the Holy Land, the Templars Quarter, the Turkish Baths and more.
NIS 175
Tour guide: Danny Syon

Thursday April 24
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SANHEDRIN
The Bar-Kochba Revolt failed. 600,000 Jews died. Jerusalem was destroyed. Jews were sold as slaves, and Tora study came to an end. But a new center arose in the Galilee, and the towns of Zippori and Tiberias became famous. We'll visit them, as well as Beit Shearim, the burial place of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi and his family.
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Thousands rally against Milosevic

By JOVANA GEC

BELGRADE (AP) — Striking teachers and independent trade union leaders joined 20,000 students who hit the streets yesterday as opponents of President Slobodan Milosevic kept up the protests that yielded their first triumph over his authoritarian rule.

On Tuesday, after three months of non-stop demonstrations, Serbia's parliament acted on Milosevic's instructions and passed a law that finally conceded local election victories won by the opposition last November.

By midday yesterday, some of the tens of thousands of teachers on strike in 1,800 schools across Serbia had surrounded the parliament building in downtown Belgrade to press their demands for overdue pay and higher wages.

Some 20,000 students who want their pro-Milosevic university rector ousted went on their 82nd daily protest march, while independent union leaders added to the street carnival by setting up a soup kitchen aimed at feeding the hungry and rallying Serbia's disorganized workers.

The main opposition coalition, Zajedno (Together), called supporters to an evening event that was to feature launching an unmanned red boat into the Danube river to symbolize the desired departure of Milosevic's neo-Communists from Belgrade.

Bowing to pressure from home and abroad, the parliament controlled by Milosevic reinstated opposition election victories in the capital Belgrade and 13 other major towns.

Milosevic apparently was hoping

to end street protests which began when he snuffed those opposition wins and developed into a grassroots revolt against his rule. Coupled with foreign pressure, it created the biggest challenge to his decade in power.

"The mood is extremely tense, people are not satisfied with crumbs," said a top opposition leader, Democratic Party leader Zoran Djindjic.

"I expect protests to continue in all of Serbia until larger changes than the return of stolen votes happen," Djindjic said.

"Serbia is in a mature stage of protests. ... Serbia will not calm down until the government is changed." Establishment of municipal governments in Belgrade, where Djindjic is to become mayor, and other cities now conceded to the opposition is expected in days.

New Rushdie bounty denounced

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain called on Iran yesterday to denounce an increased bounty for the killing of British writer Salman Rushdie.

Campaigners against the death sentence, imposed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for Rushdie's alleged blasphemy against Islam, called on Europe to break off all talks with Iran except those aimed at ending the threat on his life.

A leading Iranian politician distanced his government from the offer of a \$2.5 million reward.

Mohammad Javad Larjani said the 15th Khordad (June Fifth) Foundation, which offered the reward, was a charitable body that did not represent the government.

Shuttle set for Hubble tune-up

JOHNSON SPACE CENTER, Texas (Reuters) - The crew of the shuttle *Discovery* yesterday flexed the spacecraft's robot arm, checked their space suits and said they were ready for a service call on the orbiting Hubble telescope.

Discovery trailed Hubble by 930 km yesterday morning and was closing in on it by about 110 km with each orbit of the earth.

Final preparations were under way to retrieve the telescope early this morning for a four-day refurbishment.

Astronaut Steve Hawley, who used the shuttle's robot arm in 1990 to launch the telescope, put the Canadian-built arm through its paces to be sure it was working.

MAKING PEACE WITH THE PLO

The Rabin Government's Road to the Oslo Accord



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FLAIR

Kiss and don't tell

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Those tell-tale lipstick marks which used to signal to women that their significant others had been indulging in hanky-panky with someone else, are fast becoming a thing of the past.

After taking worldwide surveys on men's and women's attitudes to lipstick, cosmetic companies reached the conclusion that one of the more urgent needs on the agenda was the creation of a non-transfer lipstick.

Lancome went a step further with Rouge Idole, a transfer-resistant lipstick which is not only non-transferable and long-lasting but also has hydrating benefits to keep lips moist. Since its launching in the US last September until January of this year, Rouge Idole, according to Lancome marketing manager Joelle Saadia, has sold 400,000 units. The 1997 sales forecast in the US alone is 1,400,000 units.

In France, said Saadia, Rouge Idole was No. 1 in lipstick retail sales in the first month of its release.

Curious to see whether Israeli attitudes to lipstick reflected global views, Lancome commissioned Gallup (Israel) to check out the local scene. The findings presented by psychologist and Gallup general manager Dr. Avinoam Brug more or less corresponded with those of his colleagues abroad, and proved once again that men and women differ on almost everything — including lipstick.

Do men like their women to wear lipstick? Yes, but not bright screaming reds. In general, they prefer softer colors. Women think that men like other women with scarlet lips, but want their own women to wear colors which are less shocking and provocative.

In moments of intimacy, men would rather not have their women wear lipstick at all. They're scared it will leave blotches, and they're not keen on the taste. Women on the other hand, often say that they feel naked without their lipstick.

What really bugged men about lipstick was seeing it on cups and glasses. Some had childhood traumas about aunts and grandmothers leaving very visible imprints on their cheeks and then smearing the whole mess with a handkerchief in futile attempts to remove the offending color.

While women think nothing of refreshing their lipstick in public, men don't like to watch them doing it, especially when they compress their lips to even the texture. If this little exercise results in lipstick on their teeth, men are absolutely repulsed, claiming that it makes the woman in question look as if she's suffering from some severe gum disease.

Lancome's main challenge was to make its non-transfer lipstick "comfortable" and to keep the lips "supple." Products by rival companies tended to make the lips dry and uncomfortable.

As with all cosmetic products, this was yet another example of different strokes for different folks. Yes indeed, it was easy to use the slimline lipstick, which obviates the need for a crayon to outline the shape. And yes, after the required two-minute wait before blotting, it stayed put and stainlessly pure, though it did yield to a vigorous rub. As for comfortability? I'm afraid not. I was aware of it for hours after putting it on. It was like having a superfine strip of chewing gum stuck to my mouth.

Still, for those who want to play kiss and don't tell, Lancome has found a 12-shade solution.

CAVEAT EMPTORI!

Halachic wolf in sheep's clothing

By RUTHIE BLUM

Wearing clothing made of *shatez* — fabric containing both wool and linen — is prohibited by biblical law.

What many consumers may not know is that there is no civil law preventing its import or sale in Israel.

When L.B. purchased an imported woolen coat from Hamashbir Lazarchan a few years ago, an afterthought caused her to phone the shop upon arriving home to make sure that the fabric did not also contain linen.

Her fears were soon assuaged when she was assured by a Hamashbir employee that no store in the large chain sells garments containing the halachically forbidden fabric.

Recently, after exiting the Jerusalem Rabbinat where she was making arrangements for her daughter's wedding, L.B. entered a Miss Lagotte boutique.

There she quickly found the perfect jacket to wear at the upcoming wedding. Delighted to have completed this particular arrangement so painlessly, L.B. did not mind paying close to NIS 300 for the item. Subsequently, L.B. purchased other articles of clothing to match the jacket; she also had the jacket altered a bit for a better fit.

Her "mother-of-the-bride" outfit was now complete, and waiting to be worn to the big event, just around the corner.

But when her sister-in-law stopped on to take a peek at the outfit, however, L.B. was in for a big surprise.

"Look here," said the concerned relative, who came across an unwelcome label. "This jacket is made of linen and wool. It's *shatez*!"

L.B. was fit to be tied. It hadn't occurred to her to examine a label for *shatez* in a shop just outside of the Jerusalem Rabbinat.

Sadly, she returned to the shop with the no-longer-suitable jacket in tow. The shopkeeper — according to L.B. — behaved responsibly, and gave her nearly full credit (in spite of the garment's having been altered).

However, on her way out of the shop, L.B. noticed the jacket being returned to the rack, alongside an identical one. This,



For those concerned about 'shatez' beware: The law does not restrict the sale of wool and linen together.

(Brian Hendler)

she felt, would be unfair to other unsuspecting customers.

The Religious Affairs Ministry spokesman's office confirmed the biblical prohibition of *shatez*, but had no idea whether its sale in Israel is allowed.

Even Trade Ministry officials were unclear on this subject, prior to investiga-

tion. Had my question been about the sale of pork, I would have gotten immediate response from both.

Considering the fact that wearing *shatez* is as big a no-no as eating pig meat where Halacha is concerned, the confusion is confusing.

Regarding the reason behind the law

against *shatez*, one interpretation includes it as part of a series of directives intended to heighten people's sensitivities to the careful use of the natural world.

This theme is expressed in the following tale from the Midrash: When God created Adam he showed him the trees of the Garden of Eden. "Look at my beautiful creations," He said, "All are for you. Be careful not to destroy them because there will be no one after you to repair them." The restriction on the combined use of linen, which is from the ground, and wool, which is from an animal, is seen as a reminder that we must set limits — both in attitude and in practice — on our use of the natural world.

Perhaps I would have done better to phone the Environment Ministry with my query.

While there is no legal restriction on the sale of *shatez*, both the Consumer Protection law and talmudic civil law require that merchandise be marked in such a way as to prevent the misleading of the consumer.

The Talmud expanded the biblical directive "not to put a stumbling block before the blind" to include "not to mislead anyone in any area of life for which he is blind." (Other similar talmudic consumer-protection laws include the prohibition of mixing old fruit in a package with new, selling wine diluted with water, and painting old merchandise prior to a sale.)

According both to secular and to religious law, the sale of L.B.'s jacket was kosher — as the item was clearly marked.

The rest of you beware. Do not make assumptions about the clothes you purchase in this country: *Shatez* is roaming around freely.

Check the labels of all garments. If there is no clear specification of the type of fibers in the fabric, take into account that it may have wool and linen.

(My thanks to Iamar Marcus for his assistance in biblical interpretation.)

LIGHT-BULB ENLIGHTENER. For those of you curious about halogen lamps and dimmers: it is not necessary to use a dimmer on a halogen lamp but doing so helps preserve the longevity of the tube (bulb) due to a reduction in thermal shock.

Holy mackerel! Sushi fans in heaven

By DANIEL ROGOW

Whether the tuna caught last week by a Jaffa fisherman on the coast between Haifa and Netanya weighed 360 kilos, as the sushi chef at Tel Aviv's Yakimono restaurant states, or merely 320 kilos as other, possibly jealous, non-owners of the fish claim, is not significant.

At either weight, this is one of the biggest fish ever caught in our region. Tuna is a large, strong, spindle-shaped fish related to the mackerel family.

Nearly all are found in warm and temperate seas. The "albacore," which is probably the most highly prized of all tuna, is generally found off the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of North and Central America and in the Sea of Japan.

While mature Pacific tunas often attain a weight of 150 kilos or more, those that make their way to the Mediterranean are generally those called "thunions" by the French,

Italians and Spanish.

Considerably smaller than American and Japanese varieties, these tunas rarely grow to more than one meter in length and are found in local waters only from May to October. But that does not stop them from being marvelously tasty, especially when fresh, before they have found their way into cans.

Fresh tuna costs considerably more than either the frozen or tinned varieties. The fact is, however, that tuna that have been cooked fresh taste infinitely better than their tinned cousins.

The fish that was caught here was a rarity in far more ways than just its size. Categorized as a white tuna, which is remarkably similar to albacore, the firm, oily, fat-flecked flesh of the fish is so savory that some compare it to veal.

More than this, in fish size the section that the Japanese call the "toro" (the underside of the belly) is so valued that its wholesale price ranges between \$1,800 and \$3,000

per kilo. Considering that the toro on a fish this size weighs more than eight kilos, that makes this an expensive fish indeed.

In no form is the toro more appreciated than when served as sashimi, the *piece de resistance* of Japanese dining.

To make this queen of delicacies, pieces of absolutely fresh raw fish are scaled, cleaned and then soaked in water. Afterwards, the fish is filleted, the skin is removed and the meat is sliced with special sharp, thin knives.

Served with soy sauce, wasabi (the hot green horseradish that Japanese so adore) and thin slices of pickled ginger, sashimi surprises many Westerners because of its delicate, enchanting taste and its surprising lack of the smell of fish.

One enthusiastic client at the restaurant ordered 15 slices of sashimi and then went on to eat nine sushi, all made from the toro. Accompanied by warm sake, his bill came to NIS 847. On the same



There's a lot of tuna sandwich in this beast: One of the biggest fish ever caught here, this white tuna is the new star attraction at a Tel Aviv restaurant.

day, a Japanese diamond merchant residing in Tel Aviv purchased the head (including the eyes which are said to be a special delicacy) and a

kilo of the toro for a price in excess of several thousand dollars. Avi Cohen, owner of Yakimono, estimates that the fish will be avail-

able for about another week. A single slice of sashimi from the toro will cost NIS 15, the handrolls cost NIS 23.

And don't dare ask for a steak from the toro because even if you could afford it, Cohen is simply not willing to serve it.

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Dictatorship in our backyard

For Israelis, the release this week of 30 Palestinian women prisoners, some of whom were guilty of cold-blooded terrorist murder, was painful to watch. The granting of pardons, especially for heinous, nationalistically motivated crimes, always carries with it the danger that the legal system's deterrence of similar acts in the future will be weakened. The families of the victims of terrorist acts were particularly hurt by the release.

Amongst the Palestinians, however, the release was the occasion for expressions of joy. Yasser Arafat and other leading Palestinian Authority personalities arranged an official greeting for the released prisoners. The PA has for a long time made the issue of Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, and their detention conditions, a major public issue. Doing so has, among other things, been a convenient tool for the PA leadership to deflect criticism of the horrid treatment of Palestinians detained in Palestinian jails.

According to human rights groups monitoring the issue, at least 12 Palestinians have been tortured to death or shot while under interrogation since the Palestinian Authority began self-rule in the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank in 1994. These 12 reported cases reflect only a small portion of the prisoners systematically tortured by the Palestinian police.

Palestinian policemen, especially when questioned on the subject by Westerners, sometimes attempt to justify the appalling treatment of detained Palestinians by claiming that their brutal actions are necessary for the sake of effectively fighting terrorism. The lie in these statements is exposed by the fact that many of those who were tortured to death were not even charged with security offenses. For example, the latest victim of such torture, Yussef Baba, who died two weeks ago, was arrested on suspicion of making improper property sales.

The use of torture by the Palestinian police has nothing to do with the fight against terrorism and everything to do with the type of society that the leadership of the PA is imposing on the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A dark and brutal dictatorship is developing in Israel's backyard.

The torture of prisoners is only the bluntest expression of this dictatorship, and is meant to instill an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship among the Palestinian population. The institutions which should be fighting for the human rights of the residents of the PA have been reduced to impotence by Arafat. The justice system is not worthy of its name. Summary trials and detentions without trial are common. The Legislative Council is

slowly being rendered irrelevant: the Basic Law it has asked to enact is languishing for lack of signature on Arafat's desk; Arafat has not even bothered to bring the PA's budget before the Council for debate, much less approval; and PA officials summoned to report to Council committees investigating charges of corruption and human rights abuses do not even bother to show up. It is increasingly common to hear Palestinians saying – not for attribution, of course, out of fear of the consequences – that they did not struggle for so long to live under such conditions "worse than during the Israeli occupation."

Some might argue that the experience of the twentieth century has shown that trying to force-feed democracy on non-Western societies often backfires. While there are no Arab countries that can be termed full democracies, many Palestinians make a persuasive case that of all Arab societies the Palestinians have a natural proclivity to democratization because of their long exposure to Israeli democracy and "civil society." What went wrong, according to this point of view, is that control over the Palestinian population has not passed to a naturally home-grown internal leadership, but to a "foreign import from Tunis" – Yasser Arafat and his deputies. Given the record of Arafat's previous stunts as a virtually sovereign ruler in Jordan and Lebanon, conditions in the PA should come as no surprise to anyone.

Israel should be extremely concerned by these developments for a number of reasons. Out of purely humanitarian feelings one should be disturbed at the reports of torture. For another thing, Israel, along with the EU and the US, is financially propping up Arafat's mini-state. Nearly the entire PA budget is underwritten by foreign donors, and it is estimated that almost a quarter of the residents of the Palestinian territories depend on a PA government paycheck for their livelihood. Investment is virtually nonexistent. No one has a reasonable guess as to how long this situation can go on.

This leads to serious questions regarding the viability and stability of the Palestinian entity on our borders – an economic basket-case dictatorship is not a desirable neighbor. Eventually the effects of this instability will be felt throughout the region.

Obviously, the issues involved are not simple. The entire Oslo process is centered around Arafat's control of territory, abandoning the Oslo agreements is not realistic at this point and a real alternative to Arafat is not visible. Many Israelis may therefore prefer to ignore the topic, content that someone other than IDF soldiers is dealing with the Palestinian population. But in the long run, Israel ignores these questions at its peril.



The Syria-PLO axis

URI DAN
DENNIS EISENBERG

A thought-provoking revelation is in store for Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit to President Clinton in Washington this week.

He will certainly be made aware of a secret, 11-page congressional report on terrorism and warfare, drawn up under the chairmanship of New Jersey congressman Jim Saxton.

At the heart of the report is a warning about a military pact drawn up between Yasser Arafat and the Syrian government toward the end of last year, threatening hostilities against Israel.

One of the key clauses of the Damascus pact says that Arafat's police, as well as his "terrorist armed elements are to be trained" to ignite "the Israel interior in case of an escalation in the north."

The report describes Arafat's rapid construction of a chain of deep "command centers, ammunition and weapons storage areas, well-fortified to even withstand Israeli bombing and shelling. The PA is accumulating large stockpiles of anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, including missiles – all forbidden by the Oslo accords."

Security experts in Israel were already aware of Arafat's importing of vast quantities of cement from Israel into Gaza, ostensibly for constructing housing and hospitals. They will now find disturbing confirmation of their suspicion that what the PLO chief was really up to was building a four-story-deep HQ bunker complex under the ground.

To ensure close cooperation between Arafat and the Syrians, as laid down in the Damascus pact, joint offices have been opened in Beirut and Gaza. But the HQ is in Damascus, already functioning with the blessing of President Assad.

When we contacted Saxton's Washington office, we were told by his chief spokesman: "The situation has become more serious since the report was written."

"The Syrians have begun distributing weapons in the refugee camps [in southern Lebanon]. At the PA's request they have launched intensive training of PLO anti-aircraft units."

The purpose is to train these Palestinian units in the (imminent) use of the growing flow of such heavy weapons, now secretly entering Gaza.

These cadres will then be infiltrated into Gaza, where they will take command of the local Palestinian units [Arafat's "police" and "security forces"]. Even more startling news came from the head of the group that prepared Saxton's report:

"Syrian military/intelligence teams will be infiltrated into the PA area, granted Palestinian identity documents, and serve as military attaches for training Palestinian forces."

Arafat can't wait until his army has everything it needs for the war he knows is going to be waged

At the same time, the Syrians are deploying their own intelligence personnel in Gaza and in the Palestinian autonomy in Judea and Samaria. These Syrian personnel control Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, under PLO protection.

Together with the PA, the Syrians are, as the congressional report phrases it, setting up a fresh team to "employ ruthless means" to eradicate any remnants of the General Security Service's networks. This is intended to "further harm Israel's ability to prevent and fight terrorism."

In fact, so close is the cooperation between Damascus and the PA that trusted Syrian units have been ordered "to gather intelligence data about Israel, identify and designate targets in the deep Israeli rear, and detect any preparations for war."

"In the event of an eruption of violence in Lebanon or on the Syrian border," the report makes clear, "the Syrian-controlled teams will coordinate and lead the Palestinian 'contribution' to the war effort."

And "it is conceivable that the Syrian teams, along with the Palestinians they directly control, will ultimately conduct special operations inside Israel in case of a war."

The Saxton report is, of course,

based on US intelligence data, including satellites and other electronic military activity. It would be surprising if much of this information were not already known to the GSS.

The report will surely add weight to the seriousness of the liaison between the Syrians and Arafat, and their aggressive intentions.

ADVANCED weapons have been smuggled for some time into Gaza by sea, despite efforts by the Israeli navy to blockade the area. Additional arms have been gotten to the PA across the border with Egypt.

There is clearly concern in our cabinet about the buildup of Arafat's – let's call it a spade – military force.

Despite his new "super-dove" image, David Levy was sufficiently alarmed to announce recently that 30 plane loads of weapons have been flown from Iran to Damascus.

The announcement forced US officials to admit that they have known about this for some time. European intelligence sources revealed this week that accompanying the Iranian-supplied hardware on the planes were training specialists from Iran.

The weapons, including advanced rockets capable of reaching the Haifa area from Lebanon, were sent on to Hizbullah and other terrorist training in the southern part of the country and in the Bekaa Valley.

There is little doubt that many of these tools of war are fast making their way to Arafat. But the PLO chief has protested that the speed with which his army is being equipped is too slow for him.

Which is why he is pressing the prime minister as hard as he can to complete arrangements for building a seaport in Gaza and an airport in the Dahmija area – both to function independently of Israeli inspection.

Arafat is also pressing for quick implementation of safe passage for Palestinians and their goods between Gaza and the West Bank.

It would not be stretching cynicism too far to understand why this is so important to him. How else can he get the weapons detailed above into the hands of his fighters in Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem and other points close to Jerusalem and other Jewish areas?

One heartily hopes that Benjamin Netanyahu, now in Washington, will not repeat the total surrender that characterized the Hebron agreement. But his prevarications over the past few weeks bode ill.

His already shaky approach to withstanding Syria's demands for total withdrawal from the Golan – an area inextricably linked to the security zone in Lebanon – has been further weakened by Internal Security Minister Kahalani's suggestion that an "international force" be allowed to run things up on the Heights.

Has no one told Kahalani that one useless force is already stationed there?

Comments Saxton in his report, entitled *Approaching the New Circle of Arab-Israeli Fighting*: "The Clinton administration continues to apply pressure on Jerusalem to make additional concessions to Mr. Arafat, while ignoring the concurrent developments in the Middle East."

"Instead of pressuring the democratically-elected government of Israel to deviate from the policies it was elected for, the US should concentrate on helping Israel meet the growing threat of war."

Messrs. Netanyahu and Clinton: Are you there?

The writers are authors of *The Mossad: Secrets of the Israel Secret Service and other books on the Middle East*.

Our turn

JEREMY MAISSEL

Reading about Natan Sharansky's recent trip to Russia took me back 20 years, to the height of our struggle to help refuseniks and free prisoners of Zion in what was then the USSR.

As I experienced vicariously the minister's emotional return to the scene of his long incarceration, Lefortovo Prison, that name came back to me like an old adversary.

At that time, we – students, pupils, housewives and others, all fighters for the cause – were disrupting Russian ventures in Britain on a regular basis.

Tacks were thrown onto the stage when the Bolshoi Ballet performed, and Soviet theater troupes (and Aeroflot offices) carried chain-cutters as standard equipment for freeing demonstrators who had fastened themselves to doors or railings to prolong their protest.

Russian security guards were never allowed to sit back and enjoy a show. They were constantly called upon to eject Jewish activists – who would stand up, one by one, every five minutes to shout protests in a precisely-coordinated action designed to interfere with the proceedings and keep the oppression of Soviet Jews constantly in the public mind.

This intense and ongoing activity had its element of grim humor: The protest habit became so ingrained in us that whenever we attended a cultural event of any kind, no matter who the organizers were, we found ourselves having to clamp down heavily on the irresistible desire to jump up at some strategic point in the program and shout "Free Sharansky!" at the tops of our voices.

In 1984, Moscow's mayor cut short his trip to Britain because of the demonstrations he faced every time he set foot outside a building.

Agitators were on hand to bid him farewell at London's Euston Station, and activists made sure they were there to greet him.

Prisoners of Zion gave their all. Now we must do our bit

when his train rolled into Liverpool.

Historian Martin Gilbert's book on Soviet Jewry, *The Jews of Hope*, came out around that time, to general acclaim. Gilbert's account of these Jews' heroism was extra inspiration.

BEFORE the Knesset is a draft bill, approved in its first reading in the House's previous session, which proposes granting a regulated state pension to former prisoners of Zion and other former activists.

The Treasury and the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry are opposing the bill on budgetary grounds.

Distressing reports have appeared in the press about very many former activists, including Ida Nudel, Vladimir Slepak and Yosef Begun. The reports describe them and former prisoners of Zion from Iraq, Ethiopia, Romania, and North Africa as barely getting by on meager publicly-funded allowances.

Many of these people spent years in prison unable to save any money, and many arrived here too old to begin working.

These heroes of our nation braved imprisonment and other hardships. They spent their lives standing up for what they believed in. Many are too proud to put out their hands for money.

Why should they? The financial burden, the proposed pensions represent would be a small item in the state's budget, yet it would make a huge difference where it matters.

The majority of these people are elderly. Of about 2,000 prisoners of Zion from the former USSR, some 600 have died in the past two years. So even on a cold economic basis, the expense will not be a long-term one.

It has been suggested that Yisrael Ba'aliya be left to campaign on these people's behalf. This is shabby.

This issue isn't sectoral. We're talking about the whole nation's champions.

Officialdom, instead of obstructing things, should be leading a campaign to find the resources to pay these pensions.

Enabling them to live out their lives in dignity is surely the smallest sign of gratitude we can show them. Let's act now, before some Russian newspaper runs a headline saying, "Zionists starve Russian prisoners of conscience!"

The writer, a religious educator, is a member of Kibbutz Alumim.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LOCAL VOTING DISTRICTS

Sir, – The \$10,000 annual allocation to Knesset members to open offices near their homes could benefit taxpayers immensely.

At present, political parties decide which party back "represents" the people. But if voters can pour out their woes to their local Knesset member in his den, or demonstrate outside his office if he refuses to see them, he will soon realize that his popularity within the party will depend more and more on local public opinion.

At present, most MKs manage to maintain their distance from individual voters by being generally inaccessible in the Knesset, or using their homes as fortresses.

If they cannot do so any more, local voting districts may eventually come into existence in line with the pattern in the US, Britain, etc.

MACABEE DEAN

Ramat Gan.

WESTERN LAND OF ISRAEL

Sir, – I read with great interest your article of January 27, "Highlights of Beilin-Eitan final agreements position paper."

Point C, which reads "No agreement signed by the Israeli government can include a commitment to uproot Jewish settlements in the Western Land of Israel nor will any agreement compromise the rights of the residents to keep their Israeli citizenship and their ties as individuals and as a community with the State of Israel," seems to have been garbled.

I wonder where the "Jewish settlements in the Western Land of Israel" are placed, as I have the feeling that the occupied territories, where such settlements might be, are in the east of Israel and the new islands, not yet created, west of Israel. Or does your staff, which signs this article, put Israel beyond the Jordan?

DR. RICHARD MATHES

Jerusalem.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

again caught the wastewater in a bucket under the sink. Did one wash the floor or one's socks? You guessed right again, because even that was caught in a bucket under the sink. Tell me, dear soul, for what purpose could that blackened residue of domestic endeavor be useful? Down the loo, stupid...

We were happy. Sharing our food, sometimes even our water. Waiting for the sound of next week's supply. Jerusalem seemed one large

THE TELEVISION FEE

Sir, – One of the reasons that I voted for Binyamin Netanyahu in the last election was his promise not to raise taxes.

I have now received a television fee demand which does not mention the 50 percent reduction given to me as a pensioner in 1996. On enquiring about this, I was informed that this reduction for pensioners was canceled in the recent budget bill. Cancellation of benefits is a backhanded way of increasing taxes.

The Knesset members voted themselves an increase in salary of 33 percent last July. Now they are giving themselves another increase of 7 percent and are discussing giving themselves thousands of dollars to set up offices at home. I object to this most strongly.

Mr. Netanyahu has stated that he will donate his 7 percent increase to charity. His donations to charity should come out of his income and not at the expense of the taxpayers, many of whom struggle to make ends meet.

ALEXANDER TUCHMAN

Pardess Hanna.

MIDDLESBROUGH AFC

had to be some team to stay up with the giants of those days: Arsenal, Manchester City (not United) Everton, Huddersfield and Sheffield Wednesday.

Middlesbrough's left-back and captain was also England's left-back and captain in 1947-48. The forward line of those days comprised Matthews, Carter, Lawton, Mannon and Finney (with some alternations). "Golden Boy" Mannon was another Middlesbrough star.

family. The first broadcasts by Israel Radio, music, arts and gossip in Cafe Atara. We were exuberant with the knowledge that we had fought and won a Jewish homeland. Americans studying on their "bill of rights." South Africans on kibbutzim, so many, who came from 29 countries, to help in Israel's struggle for independence basked in the glory of achievement.

STANLEY MEDICKS

London.

Gary Pallister was getting his first caps for England whilst a Middlesbrough player (and we're talking about current affairs) before going to Manchester United.

Juninho and Nick Barmby appear so regularly in televised games that even a reporter should be able to see that Juninho is the physically lightweight of the two and not as reported.

MICHAEL ALGE

Kiryat Tivon.



Yes we have no politically-incorrect bananas: a Rotterdam worker unloads the first shipment of people-friendly fruit. The bananas, imported from Ecuador and Ghana, were grown in environmentally-friendly conditions by companies paying fair wages.

(Ramat)

Jews and Catholics: Not much more to say

Has the dialogue reached an impasse?
Haim Shapiro reports

Jews have good reason to be satisfied with the results of their dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church: the Church has undergone a virtual revolution, expunging anti-Jewish elements from its prayers and textbooks, fighting antisemitism, and perhaps above all, extending full recognition to Israel.

And yet it appears that in spite of these achievements, or perhaps because of them, the dialogue between Jews and Catholics seems to be under some strain. Could it be that now that Jews have what they want, they are no longer interested in talking to Catholics? At a public symposium in Jerusalem this week on The Future of Jewish-Catholic Relations in the World and in Israel, Rabbi David Rosen of the Anti-Defamation League spoke of a "creeping paralysis" of ICIC, the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, a body specifically set up to represent Jews in talks with the Roman Catholic Church.

Rosen admitted that the justification for such talks has often been to fight antisemitism and galvanize the Church into reforming its doctrine.

In simple terms, this can perhaps be best illustrated by an experience of mine while attending an interfaith gathering in Europe a few years ago. One of the participants was a haredi rabbi complete with a black hat, coat and beard, a far cry from the liberal clergy and secular lay people who usually make up most of the Jewish contingent at such gatherings.

When I asked him why he was taking part, he expressed himself in terms of pure self-preservation.

"They are looking for their Jewish roots, and we want them not to kill us," he said.

While the Jewish participants in the dialogue with the Church were not concerned with averting an imminent pogrom, they were anxious to follow up the revolution in the way the Church looked at the Jewish people, which

came in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Sister Maureen Fritz, president and founder of the Bat Kol Institute in Jerusalem, which is devoted to teaching Christians about Judaism, distributed a questionnaire given to Catholics to determine whether their textbooks were in keeping with the new outlook.

"Is the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish tradition founded upon it compared with the New Testament in such a way that both traditions are seen to be founded on both love and justice, or in a false way that sees the Hebrew Bible as forming a religion of justice, fear and legalism in contrast to a New Testament stress on God's love?" reads one question.

"Do texts treating Church history honestly admit to Christian mistreatment of Jews in various periods of history?" reads another.

"In terms of the doctrine, there is little more that needs to be said," Rosen admitted.

JUST AS important for Jews is the issue of Catholic recognition of Israel. Although Catholic spokesmen were at pains to stress that there was no connection between the "religious" discussions between Jews and Catholics and the "political" issue of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Holy See, for the Jews it was of utmost religious importance.

As long as there were no diplomatic relations, Jews felt, the Church was ignoring what Rosen described as "the inextricable relationship between Jewish and identity and Israel," and worse still, appeared to be adhering to the teaching that the Jews were being punished for deicide.

Cardinal Edward Cassidy, head of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, while reiterating the distinction between "religious" and "diplomatic," admitted that with the signing of the Fundamental Accord between the Holy See and the State of Israel, a new stage had been reached in



Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau with Vatican representative Cardinal Edward Cassidy.

(Arie Jerolimski)

Catholic-Jewish relations.

Reviewing the achievements of the past, he noted that these achievements had put into question the need for further high-level meetings and action. What remained, he appeared to say, was action and education on a local level so that religious leaders and their communities would actually know what had been achieved.

At the same time, Cassidy expressed the frustration of the Catholics who see the Orthodox rabbinate as their natural partners in dialogue, while those who engage in such talks on the Jewish side are most often Conservative or Reform rabbis or leaders of Jewish communal organizations.

The question that arises for many of us concerns the fact that often the representatives on one side of the dialogue are clergy and theologians, while those on the other side are often lay representatives of their community organizations. Yet, the questions dealt with in our dialogue have a religious signifi-

cance and... we are meeting as communities of faith," Cassidy said.

The problem was faced by Rosen, himself an Orthodox rabbi, who noted the demise of the Synagogue Council of America, a part of ICIC, following the withdrawal of the Orthodox. Reservations by American Orthodox rabbis toward such participation had come, Rosen said, following an article by the late Rabbi J.B. Soloveichik, spiritual head of Yeshiva University, expressing doubts about theological dialogue, while encouraging cooperation with non-Jews on civil, social and ethical issues.

In fact, Rosen pointed out, Soloveichik himself had participated in many theological meetings. The article, Rosen suggested, was intended to encourage more narrow-minded rabbis by suggesting a series of boundaries with which they could live. In any case, Rosen added, Orthodox rabbis in Israel and Europe make no such distinction. They view close relations between Jews

and Christians as either desirable or undesirable.

As Rosen pointed out, even the highest levels of the official rabbinate in Israel are willing to participate in interfaith gatherings, albeit usually far from Israel and from the criticism of their haredi colleagues. (In fact, Haifa Chief Rabbi She'ar Yashuv Cohen attended the opening session of the symposium and gave his blessing to the gathering.)

However, if the participation of Orthodox Jewish clergy in Israel is problematic, so is that of the higher ranks of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. In a rare appearance at such a gathering, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah noted that dialogue is a Western reality. Even in this country, it is mostly between Westernized Jews and expatriate Christians.

In order to talk to local Christians, Sabbah said, it was necessary to relate to them as Palestinians.

"Christians are not only a separated religious community. As any Christian in the world, they belong to a people

and nation; any attempt to separate them or eradicate them from their people will only harm them," he said. Noting what he called the Palestinian suffering under the yoke of oppression created by the policies of the government of Israel, Sabbah suggested that just as Western Christians had had to repent for the treatment of Jews, so Jews would have to repent for their treatment of the Palestinians.

Partially echoing Sabbah, Dr. Daniel Rossing, a Jewish educator, called for Jews to appreciate the history, situation and sensitivities of local Christians, just as Christians abroad had had to understand the special sensitivities of the Jewish minority.

"We must recognize that the Christian community wages a daily struggle for survival, relating to Moslems, Jews, Western Christians [and others and that they] face a six-dimensional chess game in which a move in one direction can mean defeat in another," Rossing said.

Jesus and the Jews

Many Jews have been surprised by the results of their dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church. The Church has undergone a virtual revolution, expunging anti-Jewish elements from its prayers and textbooks, fighting antisemitism, and perhaps above all, extending full recognition to Israel. And yet it appears that in spite of these achievements, or perhaps because of them, the dialogue between Jews and Catholics seems to be under some strain. Could it be that now that Jews have what they want, they are no longer interested in talking to Catholics? At a public symposium in Jerusalem this week on The Future of Jewish-Catholic Relations in the World and in Israel, Rabbi David Rosen of the Anti-Defamation League spoke of a "creeping paralysis" of ICIC, the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations, a body specifically set up to represent Jews in talks with the Roman Catholic Church. Rosen admitted that the justification for such talks has often been to fight antisemitism and galvanize the Church into reforming its doctrine. In simple terms, this can perhaps be best illustrated by an experience of mine while attending an interfaith gathering in Europe a few years ago. One of the participants was a haredi rabbi complete with a black hat, coat and beard, a far cry from the liberal clergy and secular lay people who usually make up most of the Jewish contingent at such gatherings. When I asked him why he was taking part, he expressed himself in terms of pure self-preservation. "They are looking for their Jewish roots, and we want them not to kill us," he said. While the Jewish participants in the dialogue with the Church were not concerned with averting an imminent pogrom, they were anxious to follow up the revolution in the way the Church looked at the Jewish people, which

DEAR RUTHIE

It's tough being a son-in-law

By RUTHIE BLUM



Dear Ruthie, My father-in-law died three years ago. Since then, my mother-in-law comes to visit us in Israel several times a year. Each time she comes, she stays for a few weeks and totally disrupts our lives. My wife and I have three children who are always very happy when their grandmother stays with us.

The problem is my wife. She and her mother have a very complicated relationship. They are always at each other's throats but are also very close in a strange way. During these visits I always end up caught in the middle - inevitably being blamed for everything.

My wife gets annoyed with me for not helping out enough; my mother-in-law gets annoyed at me for dominating her daughter's time. And then, after the visit is over, it takes us at least another two weeks to resume normal life together.

I have had it with this roller-coaster, to the point where I've even told my wife that I don't want her mother staying with us any more.

My wife then feels hurt and says that I am inconsiderate. I don't know what to do about this any more.

Seething Son-in-Law
Somewhere in Israel

Everyone, to some extent, regresses to childhood behavior when around their parents. Your wife is no exception. The difference is that most adults do not spend chunks of intense periods of time living in the same house with their parents after a certain age.

By living in your home several times a year for weeks at a time, your mother-in-law is entering your lives and altering the balance you and your wife apparently manage to achieve when she is not there.

Your wife reverts to patterns of family dynamics more relevant to her past than to her present. Her mother, too, plays out her role in the "expected" scenario. You, then, are caught in the cross-fire, and feel victimized in your own house - as a result of your hospitality to your widowed mother-in-law.

Keep in mind that it is easy to slip into unhealthy family dynamics, such that the transformation from "victim" to "participant" often occurs gradually and unconsciously.

Ask yourself whether you have begun to get swept up in an undesirable triangle.

If not, the best way to remain outside of the "sparing ring" is to make it clear to your wife (during the weeks when your lives resume normalcy) that you will be stepping aside when your mother-in-law is around, even if this means helping out around the house less than you normally do.

If, on the other hand, you find yourself acting out a little role of your own when these extended visits take place, you may have to make a concerted effort to break the cycle.

If done successfully, you will no longer need to oust your wife's mother from the premises - as you have threatened - in order to regain your home.

Dear Ruthie, What is an appropriate (and not too expensive) gift for a colleague who just had a baby? I don't have any children myself, and I'm terrible at selecting gifts of any kind.

Guileless Gift Giver
Jerusalem

Dear GGG, A photo album or picture frame; a gift certificate for a baby shop; bottles hand-painted with the baby's name; a book on child rearing. Mobiles, rattles and teething rings are all good.

Letters should be addressed to: 'Dear Ruthie,' POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem. For E-mail: editors@jpost.co.il

What was it really like in ancient Rome?

How do you convey to a modern world what life was like in ancient Rome, what it felt like to walk its streets, reside in its palaces and baste in its marketplaces?

A book? A movie? A seminar?

Some of the biggest brains in archeology, architecture, history and the classics have something else in mind: virtual-reality models to be ready in time for the year 2000 when the city celebrates its past two millennia.

At a recent seminar, experts from Italy, the United States and the Vatican tossed around the idea of pooling resources for the expensive, time-consuming project.

All the proposals aim at letting people - be they computer users sitting in their living rooms or tourists kicking up dust in the city's Imperial Forums - experience the world of the ancients as

revealed by decades of academic research.

The projects "will allow a common person to walk through the minds of outstanding historians," said Kumar Patel, vice chancellor for research at the University of California, Los Angeles.

An important side benefit for cash-strapped Italy, which has been unable to properly care for its historic monuments, would be a new way for the curious to

learn about the past without creating wear and tear. Virtual-reality models have "an important use for conservation. That's the great value of this," said Francesco Antinucci, of Italy's state-funded CNR research center.

Making the big push for international cooperation on the projects is UCLA, which dubbed its virtual-reality brainchild "Rome Reborn."

The Getty Museum in Malibu, California, commissioned UCLA to create a virtual-reality model of Trajan's Forum, which the university plans to complete by the year's end, in time for the inauguration of the museum's new Brentwood Center.

But the university has its own, more ambitious plans: reconstructing all of Rome within the city's ancient walls.

Or at least a virtual version of that. (AP)

GAME TIME

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The most comprehensive review of chess history is now available in this 3 volume series by Victor Keats.

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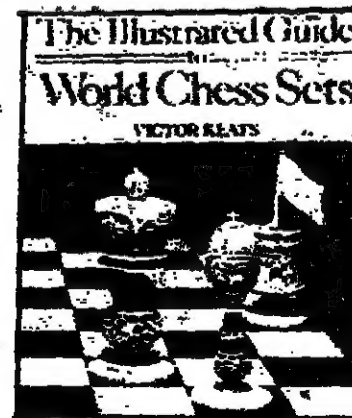
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BUSINESS

in brief

No spin-off of Hapoalim holdings before sale

Bank Hapoalim will not be forced to spin off its holdings in both Koor and Clal prior to its impending sale. Finance Minister Dan Meridor said yesterday, following a meeting on the matter with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Meridor added, however, that the recently amended Banking Law compels Hapoalim to shed its holdings in either of the two, and that the government's main concern right now is to sell a controlling share in Israel's largest bank.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Scitex owners deny renewed Gilo bid

Scitex's major shareholders, Discount Investments and International Paper, denied reports that US entrepreneur David Gilo had renewed efforts to purchase Scitex, senior officials at Discount Investments and International Paper said yesterday. On Wednesday, *Ha'arets* reported that Gilo had renewed talks with Scitex's major shareholders in an attempt to take over the Herzliya-based maker of computerized printing equipment.

"No formal offer [by Gilo] was ever made," said Molly Sullivan, spokeswoman for the New York-based International Paper, which holds 13.3% of Scitex's shares and has an agreement with Clal Israel and Discount Investments that prevents the company from selling its shares without mutual consent. Gilo first expressed interest in acquiring Scitex in April 1996, when he attempted a hostile takeover of Scitex.

Scitex is expected to release its much-awaited fourth quarter results today.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Defense producers to exhibit in Australia

The Defense Ministry has organized a pavilion for a defense exhibition in Melbourne, the first such time Israeli contractors will be brought to such an event in Oceania. The ministry's SIBAT, the Foreign Defense Assistance and Defense Export Organization, is bringing leading contractors to the Down Under Exhibition, which focuses on avionics and space and is to be held from February 18-23.

Steve Rodan

Elsint and GE form 50/50 joint venture

Elsint Ltd. of Haifa and GE Medical Systems, a \$4 billion subsidiary of General Electric Company, announced yesterday a 50/50 joint venture to engineer and manufacture nuclear medicine products. Under the terms of the deal, the joint venture company will operate in Haifa, and GEMS and Elsint will separately market and service the jointly developed nuclear medicine products under the brand name of each partner. Nuclear medicine technology, such as X-ray, mammography, magnetic resonance, ultrasound and nuclear medicine imaging devices, are used in the detection of diseases, as well as other abnormalities in veins, tissues and organs.

Jennifer Friedlin

Committee to explore telecom competition

Communications Minister Limor Livnat and Finance Minister Dan Meridor yesterday announced the appointment of an implementation team to recommend and detail ways of opening telecommunications to competition. The team, to be headed by Communications Ministry director-general Daniel Rosenne and include various senior officials from both ministries, will present its report to the ministers by July 1.

The government decided at the beginning of the year to adopt the recommendations of the Wax-Brodet-Leon Committee on increasing competition in the telecommunications sector. The committee members will be entitled to consult with representatives of other relevant ministries, outside experts and vested interests in the telecommunications field, as well as Bezeq union leaders.

Judy Siegel

Fourth quarter investments down 23%

GDP growth slows to 3% from 6% over previous six years

By Jerusalem Post Staff

The gross domestic product's growth rate slowed over the last quarter of 1996 to an annual pace of three percent from a 6%-7% rate over each of the previous six years, and investments in the local economy plunged 23% after rising 31% during the previous quarter, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported yesterday.

Analysts relate the sharp decline in investments to the economy's general slowdown, which some experts and industrialists attribute to the central bank's relatively high interest rates and arguably low exchange rate.

Earlier this week, Finance

Minister Dan Meridor told the Knesset Finance Committee the economy was not facing a recession.

Though it is experiencing a slowdown, "many Western countries would be happy to have our growth rates," he said.

The quarterly survey, which is based on preliminary data, also indicates that the annual growth rate of private consumption expenditures has slowed to 2% during the last three months of last year, after rising 5% during the previous three months.

Per-capita expenditures for the purchase of durable goods - i.e. cars, furniture, household appliances etc. - plunged during the

last quarter of 1996 by 38% in comparison with the previous three months.

Factories' investments in machinery and equipment shrank by 21% on an annualized basis, while their investments in means of transportation sank 51%.

In the real-estate sector, investments in buildings and construction works declined an annualized 10%, while investments in residential housing rose, during the fourth quarter, by an annualized 10%.

Imports of goods and services dwindled over the last quarter by 14.6% from the corresponding period in 1995, after having risen 28.2% during the third quarter last

year. Exports of goods and services declined 0.6% during the fourth quarter, after expanding by 19.4% during the previous quarter.

Meanwhile, the Labor and Welfare Ministry reported that the number of job seekers remained unchanged in January.

During the first month of the year, 136,000 people sought work through the government's employment bureaus, but after seasonal adjustments the real figure is considered to 129,000, much the same as December's, the ministry said.

Israel's 6.5% unemployment rate is among the lowest in the developed world.

Koor, Sheraton set up regional hotel chain

By HAIM SHAPIRO
and Jerusalem Post Staff

Koor and ITT Sheraton signed an agreement in Tel Aviv yesterday to establish Sheraton Israel, a joint company that will manage hotels in Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan.

The agreement - signed by ITT Sheraton Europe President Robert Cotter, Koor Industries President and CEO Benjamin Gaon, and Koor Tourism Enterprises general manager Gil Leiner - provides for a 51 percent share in Sheraton Israel for Sheraton ITT and a 49% share for Koor.

Cotter, who noted that Gaon had already held talks with PA head Yasser Arafat on establishing a tourist infrastructure in the PA, added that both partners in the new company were looking to find Palestinian partners to build hotels in such locations as Gaza and Bethlehem.

It would, he said, be one of the first focal points of the joint venture.

Cotter added that although he was not sure what role the Palestinian partner would take, the company would not go into such a venture without such a partner.

The same, he added, was true for Jordan, where Sheraton Israel is also to operate.

Leiner said that with the implementation of the transaction and completion of the hotels constructed by Koor, the company will operate about 2,100 rooms in the deluxe and recreation classes throughout the country.

According to the agreement, Sheraton Israel is to manage four hotels from the former Paradise chain - in Jerusalem, Tiberias, Eilat and the Dead Sea - under the brand name Four Points Hotels, a Sheraton group of moderately priced hotels.

Sheraton Israel is also to manage the Herod's Hotel in Eilat, which is due to be completed in 1998.

According to the company, when completed, it will be the most luxurious hotel in the Red Sea port.

ITT Sheraton and the owners of the Sheraton Plaza Jerusalem Hotel are negotiating to transfer the management of the hotel to Sheraton Israel.

All the hotels under the management of Sheraton Israel are to become part of the ITT Sheraton network from the beginning of next year.

However, they are to be immediately linked to the ITT Sheraton worldwide reservations network and sales centers around the world.

Meanwhile, ITT Sheraton yesterday rejected Hilton Hotels' \$10.5 billion hostile takeover bid as too low.



Israel, PA ink debt arrangement

Finance Minister Dan Meridor (left) and Palestinian Authority Minister of Planning Nabil Shaath (right) sign a debt-settlement deal yesterday by which Israel will transfer NIS 65 million to the PA in lieu of accumulated tax returns and an additional NIS 40m. for various other debts. The PA, for its part, will pay an estimated NIS 75m. in lieu of unpaid debts to Bezeq, Mekorot, the Electric Corporation and others.

(Text: Haim; Photo: Brian Heiler)

Central bank: Union, Leumi charge highest commissions

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Bank Leumi and Union Bank are the most expensive for maintaining a current account, while Bank Hapoalim is the cheapest, according to a survey conducted by the Bank of Israel.

A central bank spokesman said yesterday the bank stands behind its survey, despite claims by some of the banks that the data released is inaccurate.

Bank Leumi and Union Bank said the data is not a true comparison of fees.

The central bank published a table comparing the seven largest banks in terms of monthly cost of maintaining a private current account.

The data reveals that there are substantial differences of up to 33 percent in fees for performing the same service.

The table compares monthly fees for a private account in which there are 20 transactions. The chart gives data on wage earners with NIS 3,000 in overdraft credit who use an average 50% of their allocated credit per

month and similar wage earners who use an average of 150% of their allocated credit.

The chart also lists bank fees for wage earners with NIS 7,500 in overdraft credit using an average 50% of their allocated credit and similar wage earners using an average 150% of their allocated credit.

According to the chart, the average monthly cost of maintaining an account at Union Bank is NIS 61.35 for wage earners with NIS 3,000 in overdraft and using an average 50% of their allocated credit.

In comparison, at Bank Leumi the average cost is NIS 44.73, at United Mizrahi Bank NIS 42.60, at First International NIS 42.10, at Mercantile Discount the cost is NIS 41.90, at Bank Discount it is NIS 39.35.

Union Bank said the results reflect a very narrow category of customers, emphasizing that most of their clients are businessmen and wage earners with much higher monthly incomes.

"Our bank serves a different sector than that examined by the central bank," a Union Bank spokesman said.

"The published data does not reflect the real cost of the bank fees, which is much cheaper."

Bank Leumi said the central

bank's data concerning the prime rate is not accurate, explaining it makes it appear that the average customer pays maximum interest fees of prime plus 6%.

According to Leumi, the majority of customers pay the lower rate, which is only prime plus 3.5%.

Leumi also criticized the Bank of Israel for not taking into consideration the fact that, unlike other banks, it does not charge commission fees on standing orders.

Customers are usually charged the higher rates unless they negotiate with the branch manager, a Bank of Israel spokesman said, adding that Bank Leumi signed a document confirming that the rates used for the comparison are accurate.

"We took the same kind of fees from all of the banks," the spokesman said.

Last year, Bank Leumi decided to freeze commission fees almost immediately after the central bank published a similar comparison chart, which also showed it had expensive fees. In reaction to Leumi, Bank Hapoalim also froze its fees at that time.

Other findings of the chart show that Bank Discount and Mercantile Discount charge the lowest management and information fees for monthly wage earners of up to NIS 10,000.

The cost of management and information services at Bank Leumi for accounts with up to NIS 6,000 in allocated monthly overdraft credit is relatively expensive.

This is due to fixed management fees of NIS 6.9 and NIS 2 in credit allocation fees.

ECI, Belgacom in \$30m. deal

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Belgacom, Belgium's leading telecommunications operator, has selected ECI Telecom Ltd. to be its sole supplier of access-network pair-gain solutions, which expand the capacity of existing telecommunications services, an ECI representative said yesterday.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Petah Tikvah-based company will deliver its access products over the next three years, generating sales that could exceed \$30 million.

"We've opened up a very nice market, and as Belgacom's sole supplier we are in a good position," said Michael Shalit, ECI's vice president of business development, commenting on the sale.

The systems ECI will deliver to Belgacom will be supported by management controls and incorporate a special copper wire line testing feature.

Meanwhile, ECI also announced yesterday that it received a \$6.8m. contract to supply its subscriber systems to Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad, Costa Rica's state body for electricity and telecommunications.

ECI designs digital telecommunications and data transmission systems for telecommunications providers. The company is British Telecom's sole supplier of HDSL equipment, which increases the number of users that can be served through a pair of existing copper-wire telephone lines, and supplies 60% of Deutsche Telekom's high-speed optical transmission equipment, which connects trunk lines between major German cities.

Shalit said ECI is currently focusing on increasing business in the Far East. The company has been developing a distribution network in Southeast Asia and is now "looking forward to reaping the benefits," Shalit said.

Last year, ECI did \$100m. worth of business in the Philippines, and the company is currently working on a \$65m. deal with China's telecommunications operator Ji Tong. Shalit said that Li Lanqing, vice president of the council of the

People's Republic of China, has expressed interest in visiting ECI during an upcoming visit to Israel.

Earlier this week, ECI announced its fourth quarter and annual results. Revenues for the fourth quarter increased 36% to \$166.66m. from \$122.54m. for the same period one year ago.

ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (11.9.96)

Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.750	5.000	5.375
Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	4.250
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.825	2.125
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.750	1.000
Yen (10 million yen)			

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit.)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (12.2.97)

Currency basket	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rate**
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	3.5953	3.6544	3.54	3.6337	
German mark	3.3034	3.3587	3.24	3.3420	
French franc	1.9564	1.9872	1.93	1.9819	
Pound sterling	6.4111	6.4884	6.31	6.4888	
Japanese yen (100)	0.8825	0.8919	0.87	0.8872	
Dutch guilder	2.5732	2.7184	2.52	2.6840	
Swiss franc	1.7514	1.7787	1.72	1.7558	
Swedish krona	2.2932	2.3302	2.25	2.3120	
Norwegian krone	0.4450	0.4522	0.43	0.4488	
Finland mark	0.5001	0.5082	0.49	0.5052	
Canadian dollar	0.5159	0.5243	0.50	0.5124	
Australian dollar	0.8987	0.9155	0.88	0.9048	
S. African rand	2.4348	2.4741	2.39	2.4538	
Belgian franc (10)	2.4955	2.5368	2.45	2.5257	
Austrian schilling (10)	0.7479	0.7600	0.67	0.7571	
Italian lire (1000)	0.8829	0.9093	0.83	0.8908	
Jordanian dinar	2.7933	2.8984	2.74	2.8772	
Egyptian pound	2.0042	2.0586	1.98	2.0230	
ECU	4.5900	4.9100	4.59	4.9100	
Irish punt	0.9400	1.0200	0.94	1.0200	
Spanish peseta (100)	3.5229	3.6807	3.45	3.6825	
	5.2474	5.3821	5.15	5.41	
	2.3523	2.3598	2.28	2.40	

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

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TASE ROUNDOFF

Chemical companies
lead shares lower

By ROBERT DANIEL

Shares dropped yesterday, led by chemical companies and the supermarket operators Supermarket Ltd. and Blue Square Properties and Investments Ltd.

Koor Industries Ltd. and Teva

Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., which together account for more than 16.5 percent of the Maof Index, also declined.

Investors are awaiting the consumer price index report tomorrow for clues to the central bank's interest rate policy.

Shaul Gazit, analyst at Batucha Securities and Investments Ltd., said investors weren't concerned by a government report showing that the rise in fourth-quarter output of goods and services in Israel slowed to a 3% annual rate.

Gross domestic product rose at an annual rate of more than 6% from 1990 to 1995.

"There's a good possibility interest rates will be cut, if not this month, then soon," Gazit said.

"How long can you keep rates high with the economy slowing?"

The Mishtanim index of 100 most-traded shares fell 0.7% to 254.81, while the Maof index of 25 top issues dropped 1.27% to 262.41.

Across the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, NIS 134 million of shares traded, 29% less than the month's daily average of NIS 187.5m, and 21% greater than the year's average of NIS 162.8m.

Koor was the most-active issue, falling 1.5% as more than NIS 7.3m of shares traded.

The chemicals companies dropped even as the shekel weakened to 3.342 against the US dollar from 3.331 yesterday.

A weaker shekel helps the chemicals companies and other exporters by making their products cheaper for overseas buyers.

And these companies pay costs and salaries in weaker local currency and earn revenue in stronger dollars.

(Bloomberg)

Key Representative Rates

US DollarNIS 3.3420 + 0.03%

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NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

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Source: S&P COMSTOCK

DATE: 12-FEB-97

In local currencies

Dollar boosts French shares higher

PARIS (Reuters) - French shares ended higher yesterday, but just below the key 2,600 level, as continued dollar strength supported the market, traders said.

Banking and financial stocks led the risers, with the market continuing to see robust volumes.

The blue-chip CAC-40 index closed up 17.24 points or 0.67 percent at 2,599.33.

The CAC-40 futures contract was up at 2,605 from 2,591 on Tuesday's close.

Volume was nine billion francs.

The market came off its highs following Bundesbank comments that the dollar correction was over, but despite that verbal intervention, sentiment on the US currency remained buoyant and French stocks stayed bullish.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a 7-to-3 margin on the New York Stock Exchange, with 1,800 up, 777 down and 772 unchanged.

NYSE volume totaled 563.5 million shares as of 4 p.m., vs. 480.6 million in the previous session.

The Nasdaq composite index rose 27.45, or about 2 percent, to 1,359.96, but remains about 30 points shy of a new high.

The American Stock Exchange composite index rose 3.86 to 593.10.

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England loses World Cup qualifier

LONDON (Reuters) — Italy became the first team ever to beat England at home in a World Cup qualifier when a 19th-minute goal from Gianfranco Zola gave them a 1-0 victory at Wembley Stadium yesterday. Zola, who plays for London club Chelsea, slammed the ball past England goalkeeper Ian Walker after a long raking pass from Alessandro Costacurta eluded defenders Stuart Pearce and Sol Campbell, allowing Zola the space to control the ball and fire it home at the near post.

The result ended England's 100 percent start in its Group 2 qualifying campaign, leaving the team with nine points from four matches, but Italy has maintained its perfect start with its third straight win.

The match started brightly for England, which had played 28 home qualifiers since the early 1950s without defeat, but Italy gradually took control through Alessandro Costacurta and Demetrio Albertini who dictated much of their play.

England played with plenty of spirit and determination, going close to scoring through Matt Le Tissier, Graeme Le Saux and Paul Ince in the closing stages, but it could do nothing in the end to break down a superbly marshalled Italian defense.

Kings buried in Avalanche of shots

DENVER (AP) — Patrick Roy had 31 saves and Adam Deadmarsh scored his 23rd goal, leading the Colorado Avalanche to a 3-1 win over the undermanned Los Angeles Kings.

Mike Ricci and Valeri Kamensky each scored a goal for Colorado during Tuesday night's game, and Roy limited Los Angeles to only a short-handed goal in the first period.

The Kings, 2-8-1 since the All-Star break, played without leading scorer Darius Kairis, top defenseman Rob Blake and left winger Matt Johnson. Kairis was out with an injury to his right eye while Blake and Johnson were serving suspensions.

Los Angeles goalie Stephane Fiset stopped 51 shots, his most since facing 46 against Chicago on February 14, 1991, while with Quebec.

The Avalanche set a club record with 29 shots on goal in the first period. It was also the most shots ever taken against the Kings in one period.

Islanders 5, Senators 5
Marty McInnis scored with 1:49 left in the third period to lift host

New York to a tie.

McInnis took a pass from Derek King in the right circle and beat goalie Damian Rhodes to the far corner from 15 feet for his 16th goal of the season.

Travis Green scored twice for the Islanders, who are winless in six of their last seven games (1-5-1). Bryan Smolinski and Bryan Berard also scored for New York.

Alexei Yashin scored twice for Ottawa. Daniel Alfredsson, Jason Voss and Alexandre Daigle also scored for the Senators, unbeaten in four of their last five (3-1-1).

Flames 5, Bruins 1
Trevor Kidd made 31 saves to lead the host Calgary Flames to their third straight win over the Boston Bruins.

Jonas Hoglund, Dave Gagner, and Ronnie Stern each had a goal and an assist for the Flames, whose winning streak is a season-high.

Kidd, making his ninth straight start, was especially sharp in the second period while making 13 saves. He stopped Ray Bourque's slap shot from the top of the face-off circle with a dazzling glove save.



SHEER POWER — England's Alan Shearer bursts past Italy's Fabio Cannavaro during their World Cup qualifying match. (AP)

Friendlier Rodman returns to the court

CHICAGO (AP) — Dennis Rodman ran into a cameraman again — and responded with a smile and a tap instead of a kick. He also avoided a confrontation with a former head-but victim.

He battled Anthony Mason, grabbed 14 rebounds and helped the Chicago Bulls beat the Charlotte Hornets 103-100 Tuesday night, a victory that was delivered by Michael Jordan's 3-pointer at the buzzer.

As he walked off the court, Jordan hugged Rodman and said, "Welcome back." Rodman's return from an 11-game suspension — imposed by the NBA for kicking a cameraman in Minnesota on January 15 — could not have been much better.

"He kept his composure," said Jordan, who scored 43 points in the Bulls' 15th consecutive home victory. "He did just the opposite of what he did last time. He learned his lesson."

With 5:59 to play, Rodman fouled Mason and stumbled out of bounds, where he tripped over cameraman Tommy Skinner of local television station WGN. Rodman smiled, patted Skinner playfully on the chest and apologized into the camera.

"I just said, 'Are you all right? Are you all right? Please tell me you're all right!'" Rodman said.

"Are you happy, David Stern?" Stern, the NBA commissioner, gave Rodman the second-longest

suspension in league history for his January kicking of cameraman Eugene Amos — costing Rodman about \$1 million in salary as well as \$200,000 for an out-of-court settlement with Amos.

"I wasn't thinking about any money," Skinner said. "I was just trying to brace myself."

Said Rodman, who often dresses in women's clothes: "It would have been a classic if I kissed him, but he probably would have sued me for slandering all over him."

Midway through the third quarter, Rodman was upset at a non-call by Ted Bernhardt — the referee Rodman head-butted to draw a six-game suspension last season. But there was no confrontation this time; Rodman already was walking away when coach Phil Jackson took him out of the game for a rest.

Jordan and Chicago's other star, Scottie Pippen, have been very critical of Rodman because they don't want his antics to keep the Bulls from repeating as NBA champions.

"If you don't want to stick behind me, don't say nothing about me at all," said Rodman, who is donating his salary from his first 11 games back to charity. "My goal is just to win a championship. I guess if I do that, people are going to love me again. If I do something wrong, people are going to hate me."

Rodman also had harsh words for his father, Philander, who watched the game after having not seen Dennis for three decades.

The elder Rodman was flown to Chicago from the Philippines by a tabloid television show in exchange for exclusive interviews. He sat in the lower section behind the basket, often signing autographs for curious fans.

"My reaction to my dad is he comes to see one of his kids, and only one of his kids has money," said Rodman, supposedly only one of his father's 27 offspring. "That's all he's looking for. He's

looking to claim fame."

Knicks 97, Bulls 92
A new head coach couldn't prevent host Washington from the same old result against New York, whose victory ruined Bernie Bickerstaff's debut.

Patrick Ewing and John Starks scored 18 points each for the Knicks, who swept the four-game season series by beating the host Bulls for the 20th time in 21 games since November 13, 1992.

Heat 104, Pistons 91
Tim Hardaway scored 31 points and the Miami Heat shot 53 percent to win in the first matchup this season between two of the NBA's most improved teams.

Alonzo Mourning added 29 points for the Heat, who during Tuesday night's game became only the third team to score 100 points against Detroit. Miami has topped 100 five times while winning seven in a row, the league's longest current victory streak.

EASTERN CONFERENCE									
Atlantic Division									
	W	L	Pts	GF	GA		W	L	Pts
Philadelphia	30	16	8	173	136				
Florida	27	15	13	158	126				
N.Y. Rangers	28	22	10	183	158				
New Jersey	28	17	9	139	128				
Washington	22	27	6	144	152				
Tampa Bay	19	27	6	144	183				
N.Y. Islanders	17	28	10	144	166				
Northeast Division									
Buffalo	29	19	8	157	139				
Pittsburgh	30	19	5	156	126				
Montreal	21	27	10	183	208				
Hartford	21	25	7	145	174				
Ottawa	18	24	12	151	161				
Boston	20	28	7	147	182				

TUESDAY'S RESULTS: Ottawa 5, N.Y. Islanders 5; Colorado 3, Los Angeles 1; Calgary 5, Boston 1; Washington 5, Vancouver 2.

WESTERN CONFERENCE									
Central Division									
	W	L	Pts	GF	GA		W	L	Pts
Dallas	32	20	4	172	138				
Detroit	25	18	10	180	128				
St. Louis	26	6	8	172	177				
Phoenix	24	27	4	151	172				
Chicago	21	27	6	143	148				
Toronto	21	33	1	138	192				
Pacific Division									
Colorado	33	14	8	187	129				
Edmonton	27	23	5	174	156				
Vancouver	26	28	2	162	178				
Calgary	22	28	6	149	183				
Anaheim	21	28	6	145	174				
San Jose	20	28	6	146	171				
Los Angeles	19	31	4	148	181				

TUESDAY'S RESULTS: Chicago 103, Charlotte 100; Milwaukee 101, Toronto 96; San Antonio 111, Dallas 97; Houston 105, Philadelphia 94; Miami 104, Detroit 91; Chicago 103, Charlotte 100; Milwaukee 101, Toronto 96; Boston 105, Vancouver 97; Portland 111, Phoenix 108; Seattle 108, Denver 81; L.A. Clippers 116, Boston 112; Utah 120, Sacramento 98.

Maccabi can't afford to underestimate Charleroi

By BRIAN FREEMAN

The path is not easy, but the mission is clear enough.

If Maccabi wins its final two games in the Euro League final pool, the Israelis will finish second in Group E — and thus win home-court advantage in the Final 16 — no matter what other clubs do.

Tonight's matchup with winless Charleroi should be the easy part of the task, and Maccabi could not be blamed for thinking ahead to its showdown with Olympiakos next week at Yad Elihu.

But common sense — if not history — should warn Maccabi about the dangers of overconfidence. The Belgians, at 0-4, are clearly an inferior club, but at home they have managed to give quite a scare

to several teams — including first-place Stefanel Milan, Cibona Zagreb and Olympiakos (whom they forced into overtime).

Twice this decade, Maccabi has suffered a huge upset by a club that had no business defeating them. In the 1991-92 season, the Israelis strode into Italy only to fall to an 0-7 Phonocela Caserta, while the previous season the deed was done in England by lowly Kingston.

Even so, it is hard to imagine the Charleroi that lost last month at Yad Elihu to Maccabi 87-70 (and that score doesn't indicate the true extent of the rout) inflicting much damage.

The Belgians had no apparent game plan other than to haphazardly chuck up three-pointers and hope for the best. Charleroi aver-

ages more than 20 shots a night from behind the arc, even though they connect on only a third of them.

Eric Claymans is the team's main threat from three-point range, averaging 43.1 percent but only 10.8 points a night.

Charleroi's high scorer, forward Ron Ellis, scores only 13.0 points a game, while Polish center Adam Wojcik chips in a mere 12.5 points and 4.4 rebounds a contest.

Although Maccabi most likely does not need either the injured Randy White nor Brad Leaf to contribute tonight, it would be nice to see them get into shape to practice for the game with Olympiakos next week.

Even if Maccabi wins tonight, it can only clinch one of the four spots from Group E that advances

to the Final 16 this week if Alba Berlin beats visiting CSKA Moscow.

Assuming Maccabi wins tonight, it can still miss out on the best-of-three Final 16 if it loses to Olympiakos next week while CSKA wins its remaining two games (its last match is at home to Charleroi) and Berlin defeats Stefanel Milan in Italy in its final game.

Tonight's game is scheduled to be broadcast live on Channel 1 starting at 8:45 pm.

Group E			
Stefanel Milan	11	3	24
Maccabi Tel Aviv	8	6	22
Alba Berlin	8	6	22
Olympiakos	9	6	22
CSKA Moscow	7	7	21
Charleroi	0	14	14



Vote getters
Indiana received 44 points in this week's CNN/USA Today college basketball poll, but couldn't make the top 25. (AP)

Belle admits to gambling

CLEVELAND (AP) — Controversial American Major League Baseball star outfielder Albert Belle says he recently lost as much as \$40,000 gambling on pro gridiron and college basketball games, a lawyer who questioned the baseball star said yesterday.

Belle, who joined the Chicago White Sox from the Cleveland Indians last fall, made the statement under oath Tuesday while answering questions for a deposition regarding his confrontation with Halloween pranksters, attorney Richard Little said.

Little said he pursued gambling questions about Belle to attack the player's credibility. In six years with the Indians, Belle was suspended five times and received the largest fine in MLB history — \$50,000 for berating a television reporter at the 1995 World Series.

In New York, MLB spokesman Rich Levin said officials had just heard of the Belle deposition. "There's a rule on the books about betting on baseball," Levin said. "It is the only rule on the books." MLB regulations prohibit a player from betting on Major League Baseball games and have always frowned upon "consorting with known gamblers." A violation could mean suspension for one year or for life if a bet concerns the player's own team.

In 1991, Philadelphia outfielder Lenny Dykstra was placed on probation for one year by then-commissioner Fay Vincent after testifying about taking part in high-stakes poker games.

Ron Schuler, senior vice president of baseball operations for the White Sox, declined comment yesterday from the team's pre-season spring training headquarters in Sarasota, Florida.

"We do not have any information at this time, so we are not in a position to comment," Schuler said.

Little said Belle also testified he made wagers among friends on golf and that he has paid off his gambling debts with money orders.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer said Belle's lawyer, Jose Feliciano, advised his client to not answer Little's questions about the money orders and about whether Belle ever gambled on baseball or placed bets with a book maker.

5 Israelis advance in Eilat tennis satellite

By HEATHER CHAIT

Five local tennis players are through to today's quarter-final rounds of the first leg of the four-week Club Hotel Eilat satellite circuit in Beersheva.

Oren Motevassel, top seed and at No. 205, Israel's second highest ranked player, battled yesterday against qualifier Tobias Hildebrand, from Sweden. Motevassel won 7-5, 2-6, 6-4.

Fourth seed Noam Behr beat Ofer Sela 6-4, 6-3 and is the next seed remaining in the event after Martin Bok from the Netherlands and Nir Weizgreen, second and third seeds respectively, were dismissed.

Yoni Edich and Amir Hadad also won their second-round matches yesterday. Edich beat wildcard entry Reed Cordish from the United States 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 and Hadad ousted France's Jean Noel Grinda 6-3, 7-6(7/4).

Lior Dahan, another qualifier, beat Jurek Stasiak from Australia 6-4, 3-6, 7-6(9/7) in a prolonged clash.

The other players complementing the Israelis in the quarter-finals are Andres Zingman from Argentina, Andrew Ilie from Australia and Jean Francois Bachelot from France.

Today's matches begin at 11 am at the Israel Tennis Center in Beersheva.

Magnes, Frankel races held today

The 46th Magnes Race, the country's oldest race, and the Frankel Race, will be held today at the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University.

Postponed one week due to the helicopter tragedy, the two-kilometer Magnes Race will begin at 15:50 and the 5km Frankel Race will set off at 14:45.

Heather Chait

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USA Today/CNN Top 25 college basketball teams
(Through Sunday's games)

	Record	Points	Last
1. Kansas (24)	22-1	744	1
2. Wake Forest (11)	19-2	702	2
3. Minnesota (3)	20-2	686	4
4. Kentucky (2)	22-3	678	3
5. Utah	17-3	591	7
6. Clemson	19-4	554	8
7. Duke	19-5	550	12
8. Cincinnati	17-4	526	13
9. Iowa State	18-4	454	18
10. Maryland	18-6	463	9
11. Arizona	15-6	446	11
12. New Mexico	18-4	390	10
13. South Carolina	17-6	374	20
14. Michigan	17-8	350	15
15. Louisville	18-5	332	5
16. Colorado	17-6	300	19
17. North Carolina	15-6	258	16
18. Villanova	17-6	222	14
19. Xavier	18-4	151	17
20. Texas Tech	14-6	143	21
21. Illinois	17-6	132	25
22. Stanford	13-6	126	18
23. Tulane	16-7	100	24
24. Tulsa	17-4	77	22
25. UCLA	13-7	56	NR

DROPPED OUT: No. 23 Indiana (18-7)

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES: Indiana 44, Iowa 34, Pacific 31, Boston College 25, Northern Arizona 23, College of Charleston 22, New Orleans 17, St. Joseph's (Pa.) 17, Texas 17, Southern California 14, Hawaii 13, Illinois State 13, Princeton 13, Providence 13, California 12, Marquette 9, Georgia 7, Miami (Fla.) 12, Mississippi 2, Purdue 2, Boston University 1, Oklahoma 1, Oral Roberts 1, South Alabama 1.

Two rabbis remanded in alleged bribes-for-conversion scheme

By HAIM SHAPIRO

Following a television report documenting a case in which a couple paid thousands of dollars for a quickie conversion to Judaism, the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court yesterday remanded two religious functionaries for eight days each.

The incident, filmed by a hidden camera and shown on Ilana Dayan's *Fari* program on Channel 2 on Tuesday night, showed Rabbi Michael Dushinsky, the kashrut supervisor in the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry, taking \$15,000 in cash from a Jerusalem reporter and a kibbutz volunteer from Peru, who posed as a couple who said the woman was pregnant and they wanted a fast conversion so they could marry.

The film showed Dushinsky telling the couple that a conversion normally took a year or more, but that they would be provided with false witnesses who would tell a rabbinical court that the woman had lived with them and followed an observant Jewish way of life.

The court remanded Dushinsky, 51, of Petah Tikva, and Rabbi Binyamin Bar-Zohar, 46, of Jerusalem, who had functioned as the rabbi of the Mateh Yehuda Regional Council. Police told the court that since the program was aired, they had received many similar complaints from the public and that this was apparently a common phenomenon.

The police said Dushinsky had taken bribes ranging from \$7,000 to \$15,000, promising to complete the conversion process within two weeks. He then allegedly passed two-thirds of the money to Bar-Zohar, who in turn allegedly used his connections in the rabbinical courts to facilitate the conversion. The police said that they knew of at least 10 such cases and that they



Rabbi Binyamin Bar-Zohar (left) and Rabbi Michael Dushinsky yesterday at Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court.



(Tan Osechayver/Israel Sun)

had found \$32,000 in Dushinsky's home.

Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai yesterday expressed his shock and announced that Dushinsky would be immediately suspended.

Deputy Religious Affairs ministers Yigal Bibi and Arye Gamliel yesterday called a press conference, which they termed an open session of the "conversion authority," a body apparently organized in the wake of the scandal, with the participation of representatives from the ministry, the Chief Rabbinate, and the Tsomet Institute, which organizes conversion courses. A ministry spokesman said the body included

a representative of the Absorption Ministry, but none was present.

Bibi said that Dushinsky and Bar-Zohar were not rabbis and not part of the conversion apparatus. In an apparent reference to the Reform and Conservative movements, Bibi said that if conversion would be as "certain groups want," the situation regarding conversion would be as depicted in *Fact*.

However, Bibi admitted that he had not acted since November, when Anat Galili, spokesperson for the Reform Movement's Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), had told the Knesset Aliya and Absorption Committee of dozens of cases in which conversion can-

didates had been asked for bribes. At the time, Bibi had told Galili to go to the police.

Rabbi Yisrael Rosen, head of the Tsomet Institute, said that it was impossible to fool the special conversion courts used by the institute, but he acknowledged that with false witnesses it would be possible to fool a regular rabbinical court.

Rosen estimated the number converted by the special courts at 500 to 600 candidates a year, while Rabbi Rafi Dayan, an aide to Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron, who heads the rabbinical courts, said that a total of 700 to 800 people are converted annually by recognized

Orthodox rabbinical courts, of some 1,000 to 1,200 who wish to be converted.

Rabbi Einat Ramon, spokesperson for the Conservative Movement, said that almost half of those asking to be converted by Conservative rabbis had done so in reaction to being asked for bribes by those close to the Orthodox establishment.

Rabbi Uri Regev, head of the IRAC said that the bribery was a result of the monopoly of the Orthodox and their rigid and arbitrary procedures. He, too, spoke of conversion candidates who had first attempted an Orthodox conversion and had been disillusioned by demands for money.

Ayalon Hasson: I'm being stalked

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Channel 1 reporter Ayala Hasson says she has been stalked by agents from two different organizations since she revealed the alleged "Bar-On" for Hebron affair, concerning the appointment of Roni Bar-On as attorney-general.

Hasson, who spoke on Israel Radio yesterday, called one group of stalkers "the good guys" and the other "the bad guys."

She would not say who they were, but said she knows what investigating agency hired "the bad guys."

Hasson said the stalkers operate both detectives on foot on her street and agents in cars waiting on Sderot David Hamlech, which is the only way out of her street. Yesterday, she said, one side had three female detectives on her street watching her.

She said the "bad guys" interest could be to see whom she meets in the hope of finding out what she knows or who her sources are.

On one occasion, to shake off her stalkers, she advised "the good guys" when she intended to leave, and they took off in their car in one direction. As soon as they started driving off, they were followed by "the bad guys," who assumed "the good guys" were on Hasson's tracks.

Last week, the Jaffa villa of sculptor Ilana Gur was broken into, immediately after Hasson had visited there. None of the artworks or jewels was touched, and only a cellular telephone and bag of documents were taken.

WEATHER

Half	Ther	Golden
6-17	4-18	2-12
Jerusalem	2-14	
Bene-Haim	3-15	
Tel Aviv	7-17	
Beersheva	2-15	
Dead Sea	10-20	
Haifa	7-22	

Forecast: Partly cloudy, chance of rain.

AROUND THE WORLD

	LOW	F	HIGH	F	
Amsterdam	08	48	08	48	rain
Berlin	08	48	11	55	rain
Bombay	07	84	11	73	clear
Calcutta	07	84	11	73	clear
Chicago	06	41	09	48	rain
Frankfurt	08	41	14	57	rain
Geneva	08	41	14	57	rain
Hong Kong	13	59	15	59	cloudy
London	10	50	11	54	cloudy
Los Angeles	09	60	15	58	clear
Moscow	05	41	18	61	clear
Mumbai	07	84	11	73	clear
New York	07	45	12	54	cloudy
Paris	08	48	11	55	rain
Rome	08	48	11	55	rain
Singapore	01	84	11	73	clear
Sydney	16	84	23	75	rain
Tokyo	08	52	10	58	cloudy
Toronto	08	37	03	37	cloudy
Zurich	08	48	11	55	rain

Winning cards

In yesterday's daily Chance drawing, the winning cards were the queen of spades, the jack of hearts, the 10 of diamonds and the 10 of clubs.

Bill would require outside probes for IDF accidents

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset yesterday passed the preliminary reading of a bill which would place the inquiries of IDF training accidents in the hands of an independent, external investigator with the status of a judge. The bill was raised by MK Avi Yehzekel (Labor) and supported in the vote. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai. It passed unanimously by 31 votes.

Although the government opposes the bill, Mordechai voted in favor at the last moment in view of the helicopter accident. The bill relates only to training accidents, but Yehzekel hopes to present another bill to cover operational accidents such as the helicopter disaster.



French Defense Minister Charles Millon (left) tours Israel Aircraft Industries with IAI managing director Moshe Keret yesterday.

(Tan Osechayver/Israel Sun)

Millon: Increase France-Israel ties

By STEVE RODAN and ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

French Defense Minister Charles Millon pledged yesterday to revive the 1994 defense cooperation accord with Israel, saying he wants to increase sales of military equipment between the two countries.

Touring Israel Aircraft Industries outside Lod, Millon acknowledged that the nearly three-year-old accord has not produced a significant volume of sales. The total annual volume of military trade between the two countries is \$60 million.

"It's true that in the exchange of equipment between France and Israel and Israel and France, the numbers are not high," Millon said. "We have to increase these numbers. This cooperation is not just economic but political."

Millon said he hoped his two-day visit would lead to increased joint cooperation in the defense industries. He said he expects heightened activity in the months leading

to the Paris Air Show in June.

The French defense minister pointed to a little-publicized arms deal between Israel and France. This involved the acquiring of five Dolphin helicopters from the US subsidiary of the Paris-based Aerospatiale, Eurocopter.

At the same time, IAI agreed to deliver the Hunter, an unmanned air vehicle, to the French. French officials said this was an exchange of the Dolphin for the Hunter.

IAI officials said French-Israeli cooperation could extend into several spheres, such as electro-optics, avionics and satellites.

Next month, IAI chairman Avigdor Ben-Gal and IAI director-general Moshe Keret are to visit Paris as part of an Israeli delegation to explore joint cooperation with French defense industries. Ben-Gal said the goal is to develop a project from concept to production of a system.

French-Israeli defense cooperation had been virtually nil since president Charles de Gaulle

imposed an arms embargo on Israel after the Six Day War. However, the 1994 defense cooperation agreement has led to some efforts, including a high-level strategic dialogue between the defense ministries of both countries.

Still, defense industry sources said France, rated the world's third-largest defense exporter, sees Israel as a competitor in many areas. In addition, French fear of losing its Arab and Islamic customers has dampened any enthusiasm for much defense cooperation.

However, Millon, on his first visit to Israel, said he was sending a top defense official here next week to lay the foundations for joint projects. France is interested in Israeli weapons technology, particularly in armor protection and avionics.

Prior to his visit with the IDF, Millon was received by an honor guard at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv and met Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai for the first time. Mordechai briefed Millon on

the strategic situation in the Middle East and told him that Iranian and Iraqi quests to obtain non-conventional weapons would disrupt the entire region's stability.

During their discussions, Mordechai also sought French involvement in seeking a solution to the Lebanon situation. Mordechai told Millon that peace with Lebanon could pave the way to peace with Syria.

"Lebanon can be the starter which will move the political process with Syria and Lebanon, but it can also be a gigantic mine field which can harm the entire process," Mordechai said. "If our citizens and soldiers continue to be harmed, we are likely to come to an escalation which will take us backwards instead of forwards."

Millon replied that it was in his government's interest to find a political solution that will give Israel security in the framework of an arrangement between Israel and Lebanon, Israeli defense officials said.

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Sarid: Meretz is not a party of Sheinkinites

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

"We [in Meretz] are not patronizing or Sheinkinites, we are always with the underdogs and the underprivileged, and they will never have a more loyal ally than Meretz," MK Yossi Sarid said yesterday at the Meretz founding convention.

The convention marked the merger of the three factions comprising Meretz - the Citizens Rights Movement, Mapam and Shimi - into one party after five years of co-existence as three separate parties.

The parties' respective leaders decided it was time to unite the forces supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state and fighting for equality for individuals and groups, regardless of religion, origin, sex and sexual preferences.

The merger will also make it easier to field one candidate for prime minister, should the party decide to do so.

Sarid rejected the argument that Meretz represents the elite classes of north Tel Aviv, and has a patronizing attitude toward the poor or development town residents.

"People are always attaching false stigmas to us, saying we're patronizing. That's nonsense. We talk to the entire public, trying to persuade. We don't throw sand in people's eyes, we don't distribute unlets, we don't promise peace

free of charge, for there is no free peace."

"All those who do those things, they are patronizing, because they think the public can be led astray. We are not giving up on any sector of the public; we are the true allies of the weaker classes and the underprivileged."

Sarid admitted that these sectors have turned their back on Meretz in recent years "because in the past it was difficult for them to digest our policy concerning the peace process. But now that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is shaking hands with [Yasser] Arafat, they don't need Netanyahu and can come to us, because that's what we've been saying for 25 years."

CRM founder Shulamit Aloni spoke of "other days" which prevailed here until November 4, 1995, the day of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. "On that day, she said, 'we could see another future, which was severed.'"

"So sure were we of the righteousness of our way, that we ignored the growling voices around us, the deceiving words and roars of madness from Jerusalem's Zion Square and from the rioters of Zo Arzenu. We dismissed the inciting hoodlums such as the Levingers and the Kahanists, the Waldmans and Haman Poratz, and the Benny Elons and his crowd."

Aloni stressed that Meretz's "rock of existence" is tolerance, humanism and decency.



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